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CAROLINA JOURNAL

Statewide Edition
March 2006 • Vol. 15, No. 3

www.CarolinaJournal.com

A Monthly Journal of News,
Analysis, and Opinion from
the John Locke Foundation

www.JohnLocke.org

Funding Gaps, Delays Plague N.C. Roads

By MICHAEL LOWREY
Associate Editor

CHARLOTTE

For most drivers, there's a road that frustrates them. It's a project for which there's an obvious need, but it never seems to be addressed. For George Walker, a teacher at Independence High School just outside Charlotte, that road is U.S. 74 through Monroe.

"Highway 74 is old, yet you still back up in Monroe and Rockingham, adding 30 minutes to a three-hour and 15-minute trip to the coast," he said.

Of course, it isn't just the drive to the beach that can be a problem for Walker, his friends, and fellow teachers. There is no lack of problem roads, even in residential areas.

"They may widen roads, but things like adding turn lanes wait long after the homes are built.

"When they address the roads situation they usually are a decade behind,"

The state's lagging road projects, such as I-540 in Raleigh shown at right, are the result of funding shortfalls estimated to reach \$30 billion over the next 25 years. Some legislators are calling for major reforms in the way highway funds are allocated.



CJ Photo by Don Carrington

he said.

Most North Carolina cities have a road such as U.S. 74, a critical highway that state officials have been talking

about building or improving for years — and with completion scheduled for the far future.

In Charlotte, that highway is In-

dependence Boulevard — also known as U.S. 74 — the state's busiest noninterstate, which the state is rebuilding at an average rate of about one-fourth mile per year. In Wake County, the highway is the Interstate 540 loop, with completion likely to occur about 2030. In Shelby, the road is a U.S. 74 bypass. All-important projects, all seemingly delayed and delayed more.

Problems with the North Carolina highway system — such as being 10 years behind on building roads — are nothing new. In 1989, gasoline taxes were "temporarily" raised to fund the construction of specific projects such as U.S. 74 and the rest. All 36 of the highways designated by the General Assembly to be built with the extra tax revenue were originally supposed to be completed by 2003. Today that completion date remains in the distant future.

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Transit — Especially Rail — Likely To Be Hot Session Topic

By MICHAEL LOWREY
Associate Editor

CHARLOTTE

Transportation is likely to be a hotly debated topic in Raleigh when the General Assembly returns to session in May, and attention will naturally fall to rail transit in particular.

Although Charlotte recently started work on the state's first rail transit line, it's uncertain whether additional lines will be built soon. The collapse of the Triangle Transit Authority's bid to obtain federal funding for its proposed

regional rail line underscores the difficulties rail transit faces in North Carolina in general.

Cost effectiveness the key

Rail transit projects, even if built using existing rail corridors, are pricey. As a result, local and state governments typically look to the Federal Transit Administration to pick up a substantial portion of a project's cost. Those seeking federal funding have to play by the FTA's

rules, though, which includes detailed calculations of a variety of factors that FTA officials think are important in assessing the viability of a proposed rail line.

One critical factor in obtaining FTA funding for a project is that it be cost-effective, that it generate significant time-savings for commuters for the amount of money invested. The FTA measures this by calculating the incremental cost per hour of transportation system user benefits in the forecast year.

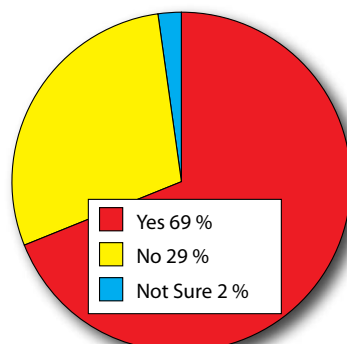
It's here that the FTA has problems

with the TTA's proposal — and on both sides of the equation, ridership numbers and associated time savings, as well as the cost of the project.

In 2004, the FTA rejected TTA's ridership projections. The federal agency found the TTA's assumptions and modeling to be questionable and withheld final approval until the problem was corrected. To date, the issue has not been resolved; recent model runs do not

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Do you support repeal of the recently imposed 3-cent gas tax?



John William Pope Civitas Institute Poll, February 2006

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The John Locke Foundation
200 W. Morgan St., #200
Raleigh, NC 27601

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Transit Issues To Dominate Upcoming Session

Continued from Page 1

show enough benefits to justify funding the line even under the less-demanding criteria the FTA used in approving infrastructure projects before last year, much less the current standard.

While ridership projections have been the best-publicized challenge facing the Durham-to-Raleigh rail line, the newly released FTA New Starts report notes a number of other serious concerns about the proposed project.

In any attempt to meet the cost-effectiveness threshold, the TTA has twice in the last two years reduced the scope of the project. In July 2004, among other changes, the agency reduced the length of its proposed opening-day line by deferring the construction of track to north Raleigh. This change would leave the line 28 miles long with 12 stations instead of 32 miles with 16 stations. The TTA estimated the total cost of the project at \$694.6 million.

More-detailed design work showed the shorter line's cost would be nearer \$900 million. In response, the TTA was again forced to make changes, including altering the type of train to be used, deleting some grade crossings, redesigning stations with shorter platforms and different canopies, and eliminating a pedestrian bridge.

All told, more than 20 changes were proposed to get the project down to a cost of \$809.9 million. The federal New Starts share would be \$485.4 million.

These latest cuts, however, have not been finalized; stakeholders have not signed off on them and the FTA and TTA are conducting a review to see what environmental impact, if any, the changes would have. Should issues arise in the review, some or all of the proposed cuts might be reversed, which would lower cost-effectiveness.

Perhaps more ominously, the FTA noted that existing bids the TTA has received might soon be outdated, further raising costs.

Enough local funds?

To make matters worse, the FTA gave the TTA the lowest grade possible on its Capital Cost Estimate and Planning Assumptions. The TTA gets tax revenue from a \$5 vehicle registration fee and a 5 percent tax on short-term auto and light-truck rentals.

The federal agency found this was more than adequate to cover the rail line's and TTA's bus service-projected operating losses. FTA officials were concerned, however, whether these sources were adequate to cover the 20 percent of the project's cost borne locally.

"The capital financial plan is heavily influenced by optimistic assumptions in the operating financial plan regarding growth in passenger revenues and operating costs, which allow a greater

amount of tax revenues to be transferred to the capital plan," the FTA noted in the New Starts report.

The TTA has projected revenues to grow faster than inflation while costs will increase more slowly than inflation. This creates smaller out-year operating losses, leaving tax revenue available to help build the system.

The capital plan also presumes development around rail stations will net \$65 million in joint development proceeds during construction, an amount FTA officials think "can only be considered speculative at best at this point in time." Part of the problem is that the TTA doesn't have a signed agreement with a main developer.

The FTA has given the TTA until Sept. 30 to address its various concerns.

South Boulevard, then what?

While the Triangle's attempt to build a rail transit line has hit a serious snag and might ultimately falter, work has begun on a 9.6-mile light-rail line in Charlotte. The route runs from uptown Charlotte along South Boulevard to near Pineville. Completion is scheduled for 2007.

The \$427 million project is far from the end of the rail transit story in the city, though. Charlotte's transit plan is based upon five transit corridors, with either rail or dedicated busways, running from uptown Charlotte. The South Boulevard line is the first of these corridors to reach construction. The whens, hows, and even-ifs of the remaining four corridors remain uncertain seven years after Mecklenburg County adopted an extra one-half cent sales tax to fund transit. The fund generates nearly \$60 million per year.

"Charlotte is not immune to these problems," UNC-Charlotte transportation studies Professor David Hartgen said. "Questions were also raised about the South Boulevard line's projections. The other corridors are significantly weaker in their ridership potential and are more costly."

Charlotte Area Transit System officials hope to extend the South Boulevard line from uptown Charlotte to the northeast of the city and eventually UNC-Charlotte, and to build a commuter rail line from the center of Charlotte northbound to the towns of Huntersville, Davidson, and Mooresville.

The plans for the last two corridors, running from uptown Charlotte to the west to Charlotte/Douglas International Airport, and to the southeast along Independence Boulevard to Mathews, are less well-defined. A choice of mode of transportation is not due before late this year.

CATS officials envision building these routes sooner. Work on all of the routes is to start by 2010 and most work is to be done by 2012 or 2013.

Whether that's realistic is another matter. None of the proposed additional rail lines has progressed to preliminary engineering status with the FTA yet, much less to the final design phase that comes before a full funding grant agreement can be finalized.

It took nearly five years from entering preliminary engineering status to get final federal approval for the South Boulevard line, while the Raleigh-Durham regional line is at the point of failure eight years after entering preliminary engineering.

As CATS' website notes, "the right-of-way and construction schedule are contingent on qualifying for federal funding." CJ



The Political Spending Cycle: Spending Binges Lead to High-Tax Hangovers (Policy Report by Joe Coletti)

A Threat to Private Property: N.C.'s Broad and Subjective Urban Redevelopment Law (Policy Report by Daren Bakst)

A Lottery That Helps Students: How Lottery Proceeds Should Be Spent for Education (Spotlight by Terry Stoops)

Visit www.JohnLocke.org. Click on *Policy Reports* and *Spotlights*.

Funding Gaps and Delays Plague State's Highway Projects

Continued from Page 1

The N.C. Department of Transportation estimates it faces a \$30 billion shortfall over the next 25 years. The Triangle's funding gap alone totals nearly \$8 billion over the next 20 years.

Things aren't necessarily better with the state's existing roads. A 1998 performance review, prepared by KPMG Peat Marwick for the Office of the State Auditor, noted a decline in the condition of secondary roads, with a significant increase in the NCDOT's resurfacing backlog and corresponding increase in funds spent patching up multiple potholes. Again, the problems persist.

"We're in limbo," said Tom Crosby, vice president for communications for the AAA Carolinas.

Crosby notes that the basic problems facing the state's highway system have been apparent for some time, but politicians haven't been willing to fix the system. Crosby doubts things will change until the public more strongly demands change.

Until the Assembly undertakes meaningful reform, conditions will only get worse on the highways.

Many small pots of gold

Though North Carolina spends billions of dollars each year on its highway system, it's not accurate to think of the state as having a single big pot of money covering all the roadwork of different sorts. State law and Department of Transportation practice has rather created a number of smaller, separate accounts, each designated for specific purposes, usually in specific locations.

When a project can't be built or the condition of a specific state road deteriorates, it's typically because there isn't enough money available in the account for that sort of work in that part of the state.

The Highway Trust Fund, which pays for many of the state's most important road projects, highlights this subdivision of money. In 1989, the legislature raised the gasoline tax and other taxes and fees to address a perceived backlog of road projects. The additional revenue went into a special account, the Highway Trust Fund, to be used for specific road projects designated by the Assembly. The higher taxes were to end when all trust fund projects were complete.

The act originally creating the trust fund provided that \$170 million be transferred from it to the General Fund each year. Since 2001, transfers to the General Fund have been increased to more than \$250 million per year.

As might be imagined, the trust fund project list was influenced by the political realities of the day. The trust fund distribution formula is:

- 25.1 percent goes to build partial or complete urban loops around specified cities. The legislation originally designated projects in Asheville, Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, Wilmington, and Winston-Salem as eligible for urban loop funds. The Assembly has added loop projects in Gaston County, Greenville, and Fayetteville. Urban loop funds are the rare case where funding decisions are discretionary.
- 62 percent for 29 designated intrastate high-

way projects. Many of the "projects" of the intrastate system are large-scale endeavors. For example, widening all of N.C. 24 to four lanes from Charlotte to Morehead City is included.

The state is further divided into seven distribution regions, with remaining intrastate miles to complete (25 percent weight), population (50 percent weight), and a one-seventh distribution each (25 percent weight) used to determine each distribution region's share each year. In 2004, the legislature approved using intrastate highway money within distribution regions on other major highways if the money could be used immediately on designated highways. The change essentially made the extra funds associated with the Highway Trust Fund permanent.

- 6.5 percent goes to help fund municipal road systems
- 6.5 percent goes for paving dirt roads, or other secondary road improvements.

The state has a number of different funds to address road maintenance, including accounts specifically for urban roads, primary roads, secondary roads, bridges, contract resurfacing, and a flexible maintenance account.



Slow work, such as that shown above on the incompleting I-540 in Raleigh, is common on projects throughout the state. (CJ photo by Don Carrington)

Allocation of these funds is determined by funding formulas, this time established by the NCDOT. Secondary-road maintenance money, for example, is allotted on a county system, based upon the number of paved miles and unpaved miles in the jurisdiction. Funds to maintain urban roads, meanwhile, are allo-

cated to the NCDOT's 14 geographic divisions, based upon urban lane-miles and population in the division. Only in the case of contract resurfacing, with money allocated by formula to divisions and then to counties, are pavement needs considered.

"The effect of these present formulas is that the differing condition levels of the system in different regions of the state are not considered, yet they play a major role in repair costs," UNC-Charlotte transportation studies Professor David Hartgen wrote in a 2004 study of the condition of the state's roads.

The current system also produces large variations in road conditions between counties, from a high of 27.2 percent of pavement in poor condition in Ashe County to a low of roads in acceptable shape in Yancey County. The average county had 8.19 percent of its roads in poor condition. In 17 counties at least 15 percent of roads were in poor condition.

Hartgen also found in his study the amount of pavement in poor condition increased by 93 miles per year between 1998 and 2004.

Fixing the problem

In 2004, the Assembly created a special committee to examine the transportation needs of urban areas. The panel, the Blue Ribbon Commission To Study

North Carolina's Urban Transportation Needs, issued its final report in December.

North Carolina's population is growing rapidly, the commission noted, and the number of miles North Carolinians are driving is growing even faster. A lot faster: The number of miles driven is growing at about 1.4 times the rate of population growth. As workers live farther from their jobs — more than half of Stokes and Franklin counties' workers, for example, commute to jobs in other counties — urban traffic woes threaten economic growth in the state as a whole.

"Given the magnitude of the Statewide funding shortfall, it is clear that no single funding, financing, or policy solution exists to solve all of the challenges facing North Carolina's large and small metropolitan regions," the panel of legislators, local officials, and transportation professionals wrote.

"Rather, a host of solutions — implemented in concert in each region, based on the region's unique needs — will be required to prevent a decline in mobility in the State," the report said.

Among the potential solutions the panel recommended the legislature consider was suspending transfers from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund, which would make more than an additional \$250 million a year available for highway construction.

The commission also suggested the state re-examine how it allocates its scarce road dollars, that the existing funding formulas were not adequate.

"The current State highway funding allocation formula is not designed to target resources to those urban and rural areas with critical mobility needs. In addition, several vital transportation priorities — such as Interstate reconstruction in both rural and urban areas — currently have no dedicated funding sources," the commission's report said.

The panel called for the Assembly to "review the components and distribution region boundaries of the current highway funding allocation formula to insure that both urban and rural transportation needs are being met for the near- and long-term." It should also create an "Interstate Maintenance Fund" not subject to the current funding formulas.

Additional use of toll roads, high-occupancy toll lanes, "junior freeways" (freeways built to less than interstate highway standards), and issuing bonds backed by future federal highway receipts were among the proposals made by the panel.

"This is to give the General Assembly a basis, an understanding, of what we need to do," said Rep. Drew Saunders, D-Mecklenburg, chairman of the commission, at the time the report came out. Whether the legislature actually decides to seriously examine any of these proposals remains to be seen.

Until then, drivers such as Walker will continue to wait for key projects such as a U.S. 74 Bypass around Monroe to be built.

DOT Highway Trust Fund

Program	2005-06	2006-07
Program Administration	\$ 41,295,740	\$ 42,918,720
Transfer to General Fund	\$ 252,558,117	\$ 252,663,009
Intrastate Highways	\$ 472,112,366	\$ 496,924,658
Urban Loops	\$ 190,902,579	\$ 200,935,637
Dirt Roads	\$ 86,825,599	\$ 90,358,988
Aid to Municipalities	\$ 49,535,599	\$ 52,138,988
Total	\$1,093,230,000	\$1,135,940,000

Source: N.C. Dept. of Transportation

Downplayed danger of Kelo-type takings in N.C.

N.C. League of Municipalities Backed New London in Court Case

By PAUL CHESSER

Associate Editor

RALEIGH

The state's League of Municipalities, despite claiming that what happened in a controversial eminent domain case in Connecticut could not happen in North Carolina, filed an amicus brief in November 2004 on behalf of the city of New London, Conn., in its successful Supreme Court case.

Defenders of private property rights say that should concern those who worry that government can use eminent domain powers for questionable policies.

Cathy Heath, a property rights activist who runs the Web site www.stopncannexation.com, said enough leeway and vagueness exist in North Carolina's statutes that local governments could use eminent domain for economic development purposes. She said laws addressing blighted properties should be of special concern to lawmakers reviewing the state statutes.

"I look at our redevelopment laws, and I look at other states' redevelopment laws," Heath said, "and I see a wide-open highway for the state of North Carolina to use those statutes to accomplish the same kinds of redevelopment."

The state's federation of cities and towns joined similar organizations from 31 other states, in filing an amicus curiae brief backing government eminent-domain taking in the *Kelo v. City of New London, Conn.* case.

The 5-4 court decision, which allows government agencies to seize private property from one owner and to give it to another private owner for economic development purposes, led to a grass-roots backlash across the nation.

A special state House committee began studying North Carolina's eminent-domain laws in January.



The *Kelo* decision addressed a situation in which a local economic development agency, with powers of eminent domain given to it by the city, sought to condemn the properties of nine owners of 15 homes in the city of New London. The agency planned to obtain the land and turn it over to a private developer, who would build offices, a hotel, and a health club.

Ellis Hankins, executive director of the N.C. League of Municipalities, said what happened in Connecticut is not possible in North Carolina.

"North Carolina law does not allow our cities, counties, or local governments to do what New London did," Hankins said.

Hankins also served as chair of the Legal Advisory Committee to the National League of Cities, which also supported the City of New London. He was asked by Donald Borut, executive director of the NLC, in 2004 to review its involvement in the case. The committee

recommended that NLC file the amicus curiae brief backing New London.

"This case deals with an essential local government tool for economic development," Borut said in an article published in NLC's weekly newsletter Oct. 18, 2004. "While it is one case involving one city, a Supreme Court decision stopping New London from using eminent domain to implement this economic development plan would have major ramifications for every city in America."

Borut and Hankins also co-wrote an editorial for the same issue of the newsletter, further explaining why the NLC and the 32 state municipality leagues backed New London.

"It is in the public interest for municipalities to pursue economic development locally and regionally because a healthy economy helps generate the revenue necessary to provide services and infrastructure needs of the public," they wrote. "At times, the ability to provide for the public good requires municipalities to exercise the power of eminent domain granted by state authority."

But Hankins insisted to *Carolina Journal* that North Carolina doesn't give eminent-domain authority to local governments for economic development purposes. He said from the NLC's perspective, they were defending New London from a local governing point of view.

"In the amicus briefs filed by the NLC and the state municipal leagues, [we] were supporting states' rights and opposing judicial activism," Hankins said.

State law allows local governments to create special agencies that may consider redevelopment necessary not only for existing blight, as determined by a local planning commission, but also to prevent "the creation of new blighted

areas" or if "there is a clear and present danger that the area will become blighted."

North Carolina law allows for eminent domain as long as there is a "redevelopment plan" in the cases of blight.

In the Supreme Court's *Kelo* ruling, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the majority opinion that "those who govern the City [of New London] were not confronted with the need to remove blight...but their determination that the area was sufficiently distressed to justify a program of economic rejuvenation is entitled to our deference."

In an editorial for the July 2005 issue of *Southern City*, Hankins wrote that proposals to "tighten" North Carolina laws on eminent domain are unnecessary, because "the statutes provide detailed legal rights and remedies for property owners."

"Our good North Carolina courts will safeguard the rights of property owners," he wrote.

But Daren Bakst, regulation policy analyst for the John Locke Foundation (which publishes *Carolina Journal*), said in a recent position paper that the state's laws on blighted property are too broadly defined.

"The law says buildings in 'blighted areas' must cause harms, such as impairing the 'sound growth of the community' and being 'conducive to ill health,'" Bakst said. "How much growth is sound growth?"

"North Carolina law needs a narrow definition of blight, or it will be open season on private property. Right now its laws are so vague they are open to all kinds of interpretation."

Hankins disagreed. "The North Carolina law on the definition of blight is very clear and specific and limited, from our perspective," he said. CJ

Friends Throw Retirement Party for Former Ferry Director

By DON CARRINGTON

Executive Editor

RALEIGH

Friends of former Ferry Division Director Jerry Gaskill, 63, of Cedar Island, planned to throw a retirement party for him even though his abrupt departure from state government was apparently not by choice.

The announcement obtained by *Carolina Journal* says the party, featuring a pig picking, is honoring Gaskill "for his hard work and dedication to the NC Ferry Division."

A federal grand jury indicted Gaskill on Jan. 18 on charges related to the Department of Transportation's efforts to establish a passenger ferry service across the Currituck Sound. Gaskill had

been Ferry Division director since 1993. On Jan. 20 he was placed on a 30-day paid investigative leave. He resigned Feb. 1, the same day the state retirement system office received his retirement application in the mail.

The event was to take place noon to 4 p.m. March 4 at the Driftwood Campground on Cedar Island. Lead organizer Larry Pittman, a Morehead City used-car dealer, said he and Gaskill have been friends for 25 years. Pittman is expecting 1,000 to 1,500 people for the event. "Gaskill has more friends than anyone I know in Carteret County," he said.

Pittman said the "Donations Welcome" phrase on the invitation was to solicit funds to help defray the estimated \$6,000 to \$7,000 cost of the event. He said

the event was not a fund-raiser to help pay Gaskill's legal bills.

The federal indictment alleges that Gaskill and others agreed in January 2004 to force Ferry Division workboats into the Corolla basin in order to create a deeper channel, knowing that no permits had been obtained for such an activity. The indictment then alleges that May 6-7, 2004 Gaskill and others carried out the operation to "prop wash" the channel. The indictment further alleges that June 25, 2004 Gaskill signed a written false statement claiming that the creation of the channel was unintentional and submitted that statement to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

He is charged with conspiracy to violate the Clean Water Act and the Riv-

ers and Harbor Act, actual violations of both acts, and with making material false statements to federal officials.

Four other Ferry Division employees have pleaded guilty in the case. They all have private lawyers. The state will not be paying for their legal expenses. "When DOT asked for outside counsel, we recommended that they require these employees to cover the cost if they pled guilty or were found guilty. The governor's office approved that recommendation," N.C. Department of Justice spokeswoman Noelle Talley told CJ.

She said the same guidelines apply to Gaskill who has hired Raleigh lawyer Thomas Manning. Gaskill is expected to appear in court on March 20 to enter a plea. CJ

North Carolina's New Identity-Theft Law Adds Protections

By MAXIMILIAN LONGLEY
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

Major provisions of a law on identity theft, passed by the General Assembly in September, took effect in December. The law's intent was to make citizens' personal information less accessible to thieves, and to help victims of identification theft put their lives back together.

Under the Identity Theft Protection Act of 2005, consumers can order a credit-reporting company to put a "security freeze" on their personal information, preventing the company from disclosing information about the person unless he has temporarily unfrozen his account.

The new law also requires that businesses destroy discarded records containing personal information. Another part of the act limits the ability of state agencies and private companies to collect and store individuals' Social Security numbers.

The legislature decided to delay the full implementation of the Social Security provisions for about a year in the case of private businesses, and for about two years in the case of state agencies. A section of the new act requires companies to notify customers of a "security breach," defined as the unauthorized disclosure of a customer's personal information in circumstances where there is a danger of ID theft.

Another provision in the law allows police in the victim's home county to take reports of ID theft, regardless of where the thief carried out his crime. If an identity thief commits crimes in another person's name, the act allows the victim to get his criminal record



expunged. People whose personal information is contained in certain public documents can apply to have the information deleted.

William McKinney at the N.C. Attorney General's Office says ID theft is a "significant and growing problem in the state."

The Federal Trade Commission, which takes complaints about identity theft, reported that it received complaints about 5,623 North Carolina ID theft cases in 2004, or 65.8 for every 100,000 population in North Carolina.

Linda Foley, founder of the ID Theft Resource Center in California, said the FTC's statistics undercount the incidence of identity theft. There are "no reliable statistics anywhere" on the

incidence of the crime, she said.

Putting a security freeze on a credit report (as provided for in laws like North Carolina's) helps guard the information in the report from would-be impersonators, Foley said. A freeze can be "inconvenient" when making a genuine credit application, because any temporary unfreezing of information takes additional time and energy. Foley, nevertheless, said she has placed a freeze on her own information.

Allowing the police in a victim's hometown to take ID theft reports, as provided in North Carolina's law, addresses an important problem, Foley said. If the police don't make a report, an ID theft victim doesn't have the official documentation he might need to

avoid paying the impostor's credit-card charges. Foley said some ID theft victims, when they try to report the crime and get a police report, are "bounced back and forth" between their hometown police departments and police in other jurisdictions.

Police don't like to take ID theft cases because catching the perpetrators is difficult — "like catching a ghost," Foley said. Unresolved complaints could end up in the department's unsolved-crime statistics, making the police and the community look bad.

Under North Carolina's new law, the victim's hometown police department can make a report in an ID theft case without including the case in the unsolved-crime statistics.

Norm Magnuson, vice president for public affairs of the Consumer Data Industry Association, a credit industry-lobbying group in Washington, D.C., said that his organization initially opposed security-freeze laws, and that it still considers such laws ineffective.

However, having concluded that security-freeze legislation is "the will of the states," Magnuson's group is now pressing for a federal law on the subject, so that there can be "one set of uniform rules."

Companies should be required only to tell customers about a security breach if there's a real risk of harm, Magnuson said. Notifying customers of all security breaches, even the harmless ones, would be like "the boy who cried wolf," Magnuson said.

Of the 130 security breaches in 2005, only one was from a credit bureau, and almost half were from state agencies, he said. CJ

Gay Seminar Teacher Under Investigation for Misconduct

By PAUL CHESSER
Associate Editor

RALEIGH

A co-teacher of a controversial seminar on homosexuality at last year's taxpayer-funded Governor's School is under investigation in Forsyth County for alleged sexual misconduct with a student.

Susan Wiseman helped lead a lecture based on a book called "The New Gay Teenager," given at the Governor's School West. The six-week Governor's School is conducted every summer, with 400 students each at two locations: Salem College in Winston-Salem (West) and Meredith College in Raleigh (East).

The residential program draws public high school students who are approaching their senior years, and who are nominated by their high schools' teachers and administrators. Students are identified as "intellectually gifted," and the program "integrat(es) academic disciplines, the arts, and unique courses...."

According to a report in the *Winston-Salem Journal* on Friday, Wiseman is being investigated for allegations of sexual activity with a 17-year-old student. The report was confirmed to *Carolina Journal* by a source involved in the investigation.

Wiseman, according to the *Journal*, is a social studies teacher at East Forsyth High School. She is also listed as a youth coordinator for the Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)-Winston-Salem.

Wiseman coled the "New Gay Teenager" seminar with a 19-year-old office assistant at the Governor's School — Wesley Nemenz — who is homosexual, a former Governor's School attendee, and a student

at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The seminar was heavily criticized by James and Beverly Burrows, whose son attended the school last year and said their son returned home from the school "confused" about homosexuality as a result of the seminar, and that they have had to seek family counseling.

"We feel that our rights as parents have been violated by this program."

**James and Beverly Burrows
In letter to DPI**

"We feel that this was totally inappropriate for the students who were 15, 16, and 17 years old," the Burrowses wrote to officials at the State Department of Public Instruction last August. "We feel that our rights as parents have been violated by this program."

The Burrowses accused the Governor's School of having a "pro-homo-

sexual agenda."

DPI and Governor's School officials defended the seminar, saying it was optional for students to attend, as is the Governor's School itself.

The state budget fully funds the program, with \$1.3 million set aside for it this fiscal year. Students are nominated based on specific areas of academic or performing-arts excellence, and pay nothing to attend, other than the cost to travel to the schools.

At least two other families were also disturbed by the changes in their children after returning from the Governor's School last year, based on students' writings on the MySpace Internet website.

Wiseman has not been charged with any crimes. Vanessa Jeter, a spokeswoman for the Department of Public Instruction, was unaware of the investigation and said she would make sure the agency's attorneys were aware of it.

"We would take that kind of thing very seriously," Jeter said. CJ

Text of speech by Winston S. Churchill III

Confronting the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism

[Editor's note: The following is an address by Winston S. Churchill III, grandson of Winston Churchill, given at the 16th Annual Dinner of the John Locke Foundation on Feb. 10, 2006 in Raleigh, N.C.]

It is both an honour and a pleasure to be your guest here tonight and to have the privilege of addressing the John Locke Foundation. First and foremost, may I congratulate you for honouring the memory of John Locke, who was very much involved in the establishment of the Governments of the Carolinas and who, most important of all, was one of the great Philosophers of the English-speaking world.

Locke's message — the vital importance of resisting authoritarianism — is as relevant to the strife-torn times of the world in which we live, as it was in the strife-torn times of the 17th Century. Authoritarianism constantly rears its ugly head, even within our own societies on both sides of the Atlantic, in so many guises and disguises, and in every field, be it religion, government or the military.

At its most extreme, authoritarianism is exemplified by the '-isms' of the 20th Century — Communism, Fascism and Nazism. The Fascists and Nazis were responsible for the deaths of more than 30 million human beings, while more than 50 million are estimated to have been murdered by Stalin and the Russian Communists, while Mao-Tse-Tung and the Chinese Communists are believed to have accounted for some 80 million.

But today a new challenge — another 'ism' — confronts us, and that is the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism. Extremist Islam has declared war on the rest of the world, as evidenced by their ruthless attacks across the globe — overwhelmingly targeted at innocent civilians. Beside the outrage of Nine-Eleven, the bombings in Madrid, in Bali, in London and, most recently, in Jordan come to mind.

Those who have declared Jihad against the West, and Western values, such as freedom of speech, are doing all in their power to mobilise against us the large Muslim communities living in our midst. In North America, there are an estimated six million Muslims in the USA, plus a further three-quarter million in Canada; while in the European Union, they number an estimated 20 million, including nearly 2 million in Britain. Unlike most other categories of migrant, the Muslims are reluctant to assimilate and, all too often, wish to pursue their own agenda.

Unbelievably, Washington is urging Europe to admit Turkey to the EU. Were that to happen, the Muslim population of Europe would sky-rocket to 100 million — an act, in my view, of con-

summate folly. Already Judeo-Christian Europe is under siege from a tidal wave of Islamic immigration. The admission of Turkey would hasten its demise. While I have a great regard for the Turks, the only democracy in the Muslim world and stalwart members of NATO, I am firmly opposed to their admission to the EU.

I would accord them most-favoured nation status, but not the right to settle in Western Europe and become EU citizens.

The scale of the problem confronting Europe today is epitomised by France, which has a Muslim community of some 6 million, or 10 percent of its population. But, if you take the population aged 20 and below, the figure rockets to 30 percent, such is the birthrate of the immigrant communities. In other words, within one further generation, France will be a Muslim country — a truly horrifying prospect.

At the same time it is vital that, in our pursuit of the men and women of terror — we do all we can not to alienate these large Muslim communities already established among us. For, without the active support of the Muslim communities, we shall never excise this deadly cancer in our midst.

Intriguingly, the dangers of extremist Islam were foreseen by Winston Churchill all of 85 years ago, as I discovered to my amazement, while compiling my most recent book "NEVER GIVE IN! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches."

Churchill is, of course, well-known for his gift of prescience and, specifically, for being the first to warn of the menace of Hitler and Nazism as early as 1932, and of the Soviet threat in his famous "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946 in Fulton, Mo.



Winston S. Churchill III speaking at the John Locke Foundation's 16th anniversary dinner on Feb. 10 in Raleigh (Photo by Don Carrington)

But how many know that he also warned the world of the dangers of Islamic Fundamentalism? I certainly did not!

On 14 June 1921, hard on the heels of the Cairo Conference, at which he had presided over the re-shaping of the Middle East, including the creation of modern day Iraq, he warned the House of

Commons:

'A large number of [Saudi Arabia's King] Bin Saud's followers belong to the Wahabi sect, a form of Mohammedanism which bears, roughly speaking, the same relationship to orthodox Islam as the most militant form of Calvinism would have borne to Rome in the fiercest times of [Europe's] religious wars.'

The Wahabis profess a life of exceeding austerity, and what they practice themselves they rigorously enforce on others. They hold it as an article of duty, as well as of faith, to kill all who do not share their opinions and to make slaves of their wives and children. Women have been put to death in Wahabi villages for simply appearing in the streets.

It is a penal offence to wear a silk garment. Men have been killed for smoking a cigarette and, as for the crime of alcohol, the most energetic supporter

of the temperance cause in this country falls far behind them. Austere, intolerant, well-armed, and blood-thirsty, in their own regions the Wahabis are a distinct factor which must be taken into account, and they have been, and still are, very dangerous to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.....

In Churchill's day, of course, the viciousness and cruelty of the Wahabis was confined to the Saudi Arabia peninsula, and their atrocities were directed exclusively against their fellow Muslims,

whom they held to be heretics for not adhering to the Wahabi creed — but not anymore.

Today the combination of the oil wealth of Saudi Arabia and the supine weakness of the Saudi royal family which — as the price for not having their own behaviour subjected to scrutiny and public criticism by these austere, extremist clerics — has bank-rolled the Wahabi fundamentalist movement, and given these fanatical zealots a global reach to their vicious creed of hatred and extremism.

The consequence has been that the Wahabis have been able to export their exceptionally intolerant brand of Islamic fundamentalism from Mauritania and Morocco on Africa's Atlantic shores, through more than two dozen countries including Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East, to as far afield as the Philippines and East Timor in the Pacific. This is the stark challenge that today confronts the Western world and I fear it will be with us, not just for a matter of years, but perhaps even for generations.

Just in the past two weeks the temperature in the Middle East has risen markedly with three significant developments. First, we have seen the wild and furious reaction, whipped up by firebrand clerics throughout the Islamic world, to the publication some five months ago in a Danish newspaper of a cartoon depicting the prophet with a smoking bomb in his turban, as tattered suicide bombers were being greeted at the Muslim Pearly Gates by a gate-keeper shooing them away & shouting: 'Get lost! We've run out of Virgins!' The fury that this mild piece of satire engendered, epitomises the clash of civilisations that is the key factor confronting us today.

Secondly, the stunning election victory in the Palestinian elections of Hamas — a terrorist organisation committed to the destruction of Israel — provided a rude shock to those in Washington who naively imagined that democracy would provide the answer to the problems of the Middle East. For many within the Beltway, free elections have been an article of faith, even though it was in a free election that Hitler first came to power, before establishing his Nazi dictatorship.

Such is the anger of the Moslem world against the West, inflamed by extremist clerics and fanned by the Al-Jazeera & Al-Arabia television networks, that truly democratic and free elections would result in the election of Fundamentalist governments throughout the Muslim world. It is a frightening fact, that in 50 Muslim countries countless millions of Muslims tell pollsters that

Continued as "Confronting" on Page 7

"Provided we have the courage to stay the course, I am convinced that we can, in the end, prevail. Any alternative is too terrible to contemplate."

***Winston S. Churchill III
Speaking at the 16th
anniversary dinner of the
John Locke Foundation***

Confronting the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism

Continued from Page 6

they regard Osama Bin Laden & Ayman al-Zawahiri as more trustworthy than President Bush.

The third and by far the most serious development, is the decision of the Iranian government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to remove the U.N. seals from its nuclear research facilities. He it is who not only denies the Holocaust ever happened, but who declares that Israel is a 'tumour' that should be 'wiped off the map'! Some Western analysts state that the Iranian president doesn't really mean what he says. There were, of course, many who said just that of Hitler's "Mein Kampf," and we saw the result.

Having reported events — including two wars — in the Middle East over the past 45 years, I think I know the Israelis well enough to say that Israel is not about to wait to find out whether or not the Iranian president means what he says. In 1981 Israel took decisive steps to take out Saddam Hussein's Osirak nuclear facility with a long-range airstrike. I do not see how she can fail to do the same in the case of the even greater threat posed to Israel by a nuclear-armed Iran.

This time it will not be so easy, as the mullahs have dispersed their nuclear facilities across 16 sites and built them deep underground, making them far more difficult to attack. But with 500 'bunker-busting' bombs from the U.S. and precision-guidance technology they will certainly make a mess of the place. The whole Muslim world will be enflamed with outrage and Iran's reaction may well be to deploy 100,000 guerrilla fighters to Iraq to fight the Americans and British — not a happy thought.

But even before these developments, siren voices could already be heard on Capitol Hill, raising the cry: 'Bring the Boys home!' I tell you: Nothing could be more disastrous than if, at this juncture, the United States were to cut and run. It would, at a stroke, undermine those forces of moderation we are seeking to establish in power, betray our troops as they fight a difficult, but necessary, battle, and break faith with those of our soldiers who have sacrificed

their lives to establish a free Iraq.

Gravest of all, we should be handing a victory of gigantic proportions to our sworn enemies. Let no one imagine that by pulling out of Iraq, the threat will simply evaporate. On the contrary, it will redouble, it will come closer to home and our enemies will have established in Iraq the very base that, by our defeat of the Taliban, we have denied them in Afghanistan. We shall see a desperately weakened United States, with its armed forces undermined and demoralised, increasingly at the mercy of our terrorist enemies.

Precipitate withdrawal is the counsel of defeatism and cowardice which, if it holds sway, will immeasurably increase the dangers that today confront, not just America, but the entire Western world. It is something for which we shall pay a terrible price in the years ahead. When great nations go to war — and they should do so only as a last resort — they must expect to suffer grievous losses and must commit to war with an unconquerable resolve to secure victory.

In Iraq the United States has lost some 2,200 men and women, Britain just over 100. Compare that to the first day of the Battle of the Somme — 1 July 1916 — when the British Army in a single day, nay, before breakfast, lost 55,000 men killed, wounded or missing in action. Did we talk of quitting?

What has happened to the mighty United States? Is it going soft? Are the elected representatives of the American people ready to surrender to those who threaten their homeland — indeed their civilian population — with death and

destruction? I pray that they are not, and I call to mind the words of my Grandfather, addressing the Canadian Parliament on New Year's Day 1941, in which — referring to the British nation dwelling around the globe, but it applies equally to our American cousins today — when he declared:

"We are a tough & hardy people! We have not travelled across the centuries, across the oceans, across the mountains & across the prairies, because we're made of sugar candy!"

In conclusion, I would remind you — and especially the legislators on Capitol Hill — of Winston Churchill's words to the House of Commons on becoming prime minister in May 1940, which applies every bit as much to the situation that confronts us today:

"You ask: What is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror. However long or hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival."

Provided we have the courage to stay the course, I am convinced that we can, in the end, prevail. Any alternative is too terrible to contemplate. There are no quick, easy solutions; on the contrary it will be a long, hard slog.

But more leadership is needed from on high and, above all, more guts and determination if we are to see this through to victory.

Let us fight the good fight — and let us fight it together! How pleased my Grandfather would be to know that — 40 years on from his death — the Anglo-American alliance is still strong and that British and American soldiers stand shoulder-to-shoulder in Iraq and in Afghanistan, confronting the peril of the hour!

Long may we stand together! God bless America! CJ

"Precipitate withdrawal [from Iraq] is the counsel of defeatism and cowardice."

Winston S. Churchill III


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State School Briefs

Mecklenburg PR panel

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They've all been appointed to a committee charged with finding a way to restore voter confidence in the way Charlotte-Mecklenburg builds schools, and developing a new plan to pay for them, *The Charlotte Observer* reports.

Mecklenburg County commissioners endorsed forming the 35-member committee in December, a month after voters rejected a record \$427 million school bond proposal. County commissioners, school board members, and mayors around the county were all asked to appoint one member apiece, and 26 had been appointed by mid-February.

Former Gov. Jim Martin, who has agreed to be chairman of the group, said he would release the names of his nine appointees soon.

Martin said his committee can't rebuild public confidence on its own. For example, he said he hopes to see the school board adopt many recommendations from a recent citizens task force report.

Science, math? No problem

If improving science and math education is suddenly a national priority, someone apparently forgot to tell the parents and the students, *The News & Observer* of Raleigh reports.

In a new poll, 57 percent of parents say "things are fine" with the amount of math and science being taught in their children's public schools. High school parents seem particularly content—70 percent of them say their children get the right amount of science and math.

Students aren't too worried, either, according to the poll released Feb. 14 by Public Agenda, a public opinion research group that tracks education trends.

Only half of children in grades six to 12 say that understanding sciences and having strong math skills are essential for them to succeed in life after high school.

This is not what the people in charge of the country want to hear. Congressional leaders, governors, corporate executives, top scientists—all of them have urgently called for schools to raise the rigor and amount of math and science taught in school. In his State of the Union address, President Bush made the matter a national priority. CJ

From 8th grade to college

'Learn and Earn' Program's Impact in Future

By HAL YOUNG
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

In the midst of his 2004 re-election campaign, Gov. Mike Easley announced a plan to create high schools on college campuses, add a year to the curriculum, and graduate students with diplomas and associates degrees at the same time. In his press release, the governor outlined contrasting goals for the "Learn and Earn Early College High School Initiative," saying this "new model of high school" would give students a boost for future jobs with higher educational requirements.

A year and half into the project, there are 14 such schools in operation, 23 more planned for this fall, and a goal of 75 by 2008. The first students will not graduate until the program is statewide, though, and leaders say Learn and Earn's true impact will not be known until sometime in the future.

Geoff Coltrane, director of research and communications for the North Carolina New Schools Project, which administers Learn and Earn in partnership with the Department of Public Instruction, explained the program's focus in terms of both academics and "soft skills."

"The goal of the Learn and Earn schools is to prepare students to meet the needs of the high tech, biotech, and other jobs which are coming to replace those jobs lost in the state since 2000," Coltrane said. "They need to be ready to work in teams, to communicate orally and in writing, and be more analytical in their work to be prepared for the demands of 21st century work and citizenship."

To do this, Learn and Earn creates five-year high schools on the campus of local colleges or universities. Ninth- and 10th-grade programs are redesigned to prepare students for college work as early as their first year, with the ultimate goal of leaving "grade 13" with a two-year degree or two years of transferable credit. Schools are limited to 400 students, with extra counseling staff to assist with the transition from eighth grade to a college campus.

But while emphasizing the benefits of college credit, Easley also promoted Learn and Earn as a dropout-reduction tool. "[W]e are still losing too many students between grades nine and 12 who drop out," he said. "This plan will give high school students another option that provides them with a marketable degree that prepares them for the workforce."

Coltrane said it is too early to measure what impact Learn and Earn is having on graduation rates; nearly all the 800 students involved with the program are ninth- and 10th-graders. "We have some initial numbers, but nothing firm," Coltrane said. Smaller schools and longer relationships between students

and faculty will better enable teachers to detect and help faltering students, he said.

Meg Turner, principal of Buncombe County Early College in Asheville, sees her school as one part of the larger effort to improve graduation rates. The "Middle College" program that preceded BCEC, she said, "was truly a drop-out prevention program. We only took juniors and seniors who were truly on the verge of dropping out." The Early College model is totally different, both in demographics and in approach, she said.

"The way I like to think about that is the more options a school district has for schools, the more likely a kid will find what he needs, and the less likely he'll be to drop out. Early College creates another alternative," she said.

Unlike either accelerated programs for gifted students or efforts to target at-risk students for assistance, Learn and Earn is specifically looking for a diverse demographic. According to program guidelines, students are selected to reflect the local population. All of them, though, are expected to complete the college level curriculum.

While the governor's initiative has received national attention, it is not the only way high schoolers can pick up college credits. In fact, with its cap of 400 students at each campus, Learn and Earn is one of the more-limited alternatives.

Dual enrollment, where high schoolers enroll in community college classes alongside traditional students, and Huskins programs, where public schools contract with colleges to teach certain courses, have existed for a number of years. While uncommon, some energetic students have completed the full requirements to pick up their associates degree while still attending a traditional four-year high school.

Advanced Placement courses in the traditional high school are another alternative. According to the state Department of Public Instruction, more than 34,000 North Carolina students took AP courses last year, sitting for 62,358 final exams, which could earn each of them three or more credit hours in college. Some private schools also offer the courses, and homeschoolers can use a variety of online programs and correspondence classes to cover the

same material.

Turner explained how the Early College high schools' approach trims wasted effort from the curriculum to compress a six-year course sequence into five. "We blend courses, eliminate duplicated objectives, and find a different way of looking at high school credit, college credit, and how they're awarded," she said. For example, BCEC is negotiating with a host campus, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, to adjust the college's U.S. history syllabus to address high school requirements, too. This required a waiver from the Department of Public Instruction, but it will eliminate one year of duplicated study for the subject.

Ken Whitehurst, who oversees Learn and

Earn programs for the N.C. Community College System, sees this as one of the key advantages of the project. "I think it's really great to cause community colleges and the public schools to sit down together and work on developing a common curriculum."

Turner said her 52 students, all ninth-graders, are taking a criminal-justice class this semester, which will count as a high school elective. Younger students mainly finish up prerequisite high school classes before tackling full course loads of college work in years four and five.

There are other challenges embedded in the rapidly expanding program. Whitehurst said that community colleges provide the classroom space while DPI provides the teachers and students. Facilities to accommodate both Learn and Earn and the colleges' traditional students might become an issue as the high schools grow, he said.

There is also potential for mixing more than curriculum on campus, as high school students, some as young as 13, share classes with adult students. Whitehurst points to the dual enrollment experience of the colleges, and doesn't foresee a problem. "This is not our first time in this area," he said.

Turner takes it seriously, though. "[W]e really have to be careful for student safety," she said. "When we were the Middle College, those were all 16- and 17-year-olds, but 14 is a different matter."

"It's important to families that we stay on top of this," she said. CJ

"I think it's really great to cause community colleges and the public schools to sit down together and work on developing a common curriculum."

Ken Whitehurst
N.C. Community
College System

All Eyes in N.C. Are Focused On Law Dubbed 'Black Eye Bill'

By KAREN WELSH
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH
All eyes are on North Carolina Senate Bill 622, a law passed in August 2005 by lockstep legislators that forces all children to receive eye exams by an ophthalmologist or optometrist before the children enter kindergarten or face expulsion from public school.

This newest fee, estimated to cost \$90 to \$120 per child, is a financial burden on families that have small children, said Senate Republican Leader Phil Berger, who represents Guilford and Rockingham counties. He said the bill was slipped in at the last minute after the Democrat majority met in private.

Now dubbed "The Black Eye Bill," the measure was introduced by Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, a private optometrist, who will gain financially if the new law stands as currently written.

Berger said that the eye test was not included in the first draft of the House or Senate budgets and that it wasn't in the House revised bill that came back to the Senate floor. Berger said the new law was slipped in during secret budget negotiations and smacks of cronyism.

He said it should be an eye-opening sign of how business is done in the state capital. "Democrats met behind closed doors to iron out their budgetary differences — to reach compromises," he said. "Unfortunately, all too many things get into the final bill without much knowledge from the people who are supposed to know what's going on. Some people would say it's horse trading. It's a real problem. It seems to me this is some evidence of corruption in our system."

Berger said the law was included in a lengthy conference report that revealed the provision for the eye exams, hidden in 300 pages of budgetary items. "We only had 24 hours to read the report," he said. "At that point, it was procedurally at a state when an amendment couldn't be made to take it out."

Backlash over the eye test has sent Democrats scurrying into the dark, as both liberal and conservative child-advocate organizations have taken a strong stand against the law and have written North Carolina legislators, asking them to repeal the bill.

"Children should never be stopped at the schoolhouse door because their parents have not paid for an eye exam," wrote Brian Lewis, executive director of Covenant with North Carolina's Children, Inc. "And to deny a child access to a sound, basic education because their

eye exam was performed by a pediatrician and not an optometrist is not only shortsighted public policy, it is billing children \$90 for a constitutional right to be educated."

The special provision is an "inappropriate and inefficient way to meet the vision care needs of children," wrote Peter J. Morris MD, president of the North Carolina Pediatric Society.



House Speaker Jim Black, who pushed the eye-exam bill

W. Zachery Bridges MD, president of The North Carolina Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons, said his organization has "serious concerns" over the new legislation. He said the new law goes against the findings of a multi-disciplinary task force, including both ophthalmologists and optometrists, that addressed the issue in 2004.

He said a recommendation was sent to all legislators, requesting an expansion in the vision screening component of the existing health assessment that children must receive before entering kindergarten — not a mandated comprehensive eye exam. Jim Causby, executive director of the North Carolina School Superintendents' Association, and Katherine Joyce, interim executive director of the N.C. Association of School Administrators, submitted almost identical letters, stating the law will put school principals and administrators in an unconscionable position.

"Unfortunately, thousands of school principals and other administrators in our state face the specter of standing in the schoolhouse door and denying children entry into kindergarten if they are to uphold state law," they stressed. "...If this statute is not repealed, schools throughout North Carolina will be forced to either ignore state law, or bar 5-year-olds from their rightful seat in kindergarten. Surely this is not the choice you intended."

Leanne Winner, director of government relations for the North Carolina School Boards Association, asked legislators for a swift solution to the problems the law has created. "This requirement puts schools in an untenable position," she wrote. "School districts across the state will be forced to choose between complying with the eye exam or the provisions of the North Carolina Constitution."

Although the Department of Public Instruction did not push the bill, it appears the mostly Democrat-appointed leadership will require all educators to follow the letter of the law.

"We have no comment to (SB 622)," said DPI Media Relations Director Linda Fuller. "It wasn't something we asked for, and it was not a part of our legislative agenda," she said. to it." CJ

Commentary

Know What's Being Spent — And How

Four decades have passed since George Harrison penned the lyrics to the Beatles song "Taxman," railing against severe British tax rates. While it's unlikely we'll ever be taxed like the Beatles were in the 1960s, most of us still have strong feelings about our modern-day tax collectors. In a few short weeks, we will begin the tedious process of sifting through our 1040s and 1099s. Meanwhile, state legislators and local officials will begin debating how to spend our money. The 2006 short session of the North Carolina General Assembly will undoubtedly feature heated discussions over funding; at the local level, county commissions will begin setting yearly budgets.

Where does our tax money go? Despite incessant claims of insufficient funding by the education bureaucracy, a lot of it goes to public schools. But what kind of return are we getting on our investment?

Recently, John Stossel of ABC's "20/20" hosted a documentary, "Stupid in America," a stinging indictment of our monopoly-controlled public education system. In the program, Stossel reveals that while we may be spending ourselves into oblivion, we're getting little back by way of results. Adjusting for inflation, the national average for per-pupil spending doubled between 1971 and 2001, from \$4,479 to \$8,996. Yet, achievement for the average public school student has remained stagnant. International comparisons provide more bad news: When American students take an international test at age 15, they place 25th out of 40 countries.

Even at the state level, big spenders can't back their expenditures up with results. In 2001-02, schools in the District of Columbia, our country's top spenders overall, spent \$15,489 per student. Utah and Mississippi, at the other end of the spectrum, spent less than \$6,000 per pupil. Yet, children in Utah and Mississippi consistently outperform D.C. students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Sure, the demographics are significantly different in these regions, but it's hard to believe an extra \$9,000 per student doesn't even things out a little.

If more money won't solve our problems, then what will? Jay Greene, head of the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas and author of *Educa-*

tion Myths, shared a few ideas with "20/20" viewers. According to Dr. Greene, public education needs an infusion of incentive-based reforms, in the form of choice and accountability. Choice (and competition) pressures schools to improve or risk losing students (and the revenue they generate). Strong accountability systems reward schools and educators for high-quality work and sanction them for mediocre performance. These are good ideas, though they're destined for a chilly reception from the education establishment.

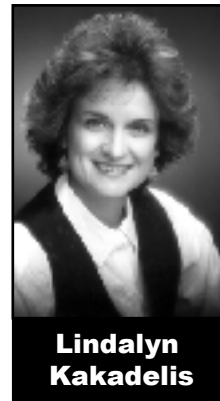
What should you do when the educational funding debate

ignites in your local area? Start by knowing how much is spent on education. In 2003-04, North Carolina spent more than a total of \$9 billion on public education. But even more important, know how money is spent. Include all education dollar totals in your calculations — for federal, state, and local spending. Be forewarned that school systems traditionally separate operational expenditures from costs associated with facility funding and debt on bonds (that county commissioners pay), so totals often appear significantly less than they really are. In reality, many counties spend more than 50 percent of their total budget on education, leaving little for libraries, parks, and other programs.

The Alliance can provide you with concise, factual information on education spending. Our new brochure, "Paying the Price: Real Facts about Education Funding in North Carolina," sets the record straight on school funding in our state, and provides North Carolinians with a common-sense look at the data. Contact me at 704-231-9767 or lkakadelis@nceducationalliance.org to receive a copy.

Whatever your views on education funding, know the facts. Like it or not, your tax dollars support all of our state's public schools — good and bad. Fortunately, as a taxpayer and voter, you have the power to hold elected officials accountable for how they spend your money. If their financial stewardship is lacking, it may be time for an "adjustment." CJ

Lindalyn Kakadelis is director of the North Carolina Education Alliance.



Lindalyn Kakadelis

School Reform Notes

Leave us behind, N.C. asks

About 15 states — including North Carolina — are vying to be chosen as one of the few that will be allowed some leeway in how student progress is measured under the No Child Left Behind Act, the federal education law criticized by some as overly rigid.

Applications were due Feb. 17, three months after Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced that states would be allowed to seek some flexibility, the Associated Press reports.

Under the current law, schools are expected to show year-to-year improvement in test scores — for example, this year's third-grade scores are compared to last year's.

Under the pilot program, however, schools will be allowed to chart how individual students are doing on standardized tests from one year to the next.

The idea is the latest move by the Bush administration to allow more breathing room in the No Child Left Behind law. The administration is also giving rural teachers more time to become "highly qualified" and allowing more exemptions for severely disabled students.

Get physical in Buncombe

New rules designed to get North Carolina students more physically active in schools are raising a lot of questions among educators in Buncombe County trying to balance fitness and academics, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* reports.

Though students would benefit from the increased activity, said Doug Jones, health education coordinator for Buncombe County and Asheville City schools, working out the logistics of adding 30 minutes of structured physical movement to the school day could be tricky.

"I think the challenge is in schools trying to find a way to address the 30 minutes a day of physical activity without interfering with academic progress and how this is going to be done with a limited number of [physical education] teachers, limited space, and limited time," Jones said.

The new policy issued by the state Board of Education requires schools to incorporate "physical exertion of at least a moderate intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students." *CJ*

MDTA, CETA, JTPA

Job-Training Efforts' Success Difficult to Gauge

By SAM A. HIEB
Contributing Editor

GREENSBORO

Last month, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that the Triad of North Carolina would be the recipient of a \$15 million grant to better train local workers for globally competitive jobs.

Needless to say, many treated the announcement as a windfall for the area.

"We are fighting the battle to stay afloat in the global economy on the home front. Innovation, an achievable game plan, and wise use of resources will be critical. A \$15 million check from Washington will be helpful," wrote the editors of the *Greensboro News & Record*.

But just how helpful is a matter of debate. Even the Bush administration, while spearheading yet another aggressive federal job-training program, admits there's no standard to measure the effectiveness of such programs.

The Triad's grant is part of President Bush's Competitiveness Agenda, which is part of the federal government's new focus on regionalism when developing job-training programs. Including the Triad, the Labor Department selected 12 multicounty economic regions from around the country to receive the \$15 million in funding, spread out over a three-year period.

Economic development agencies, many of which previously had been focused on marketing efforts designed to attract business and industry to their regions, will soon find themselves in charge of federal money designed to create job-training programs.

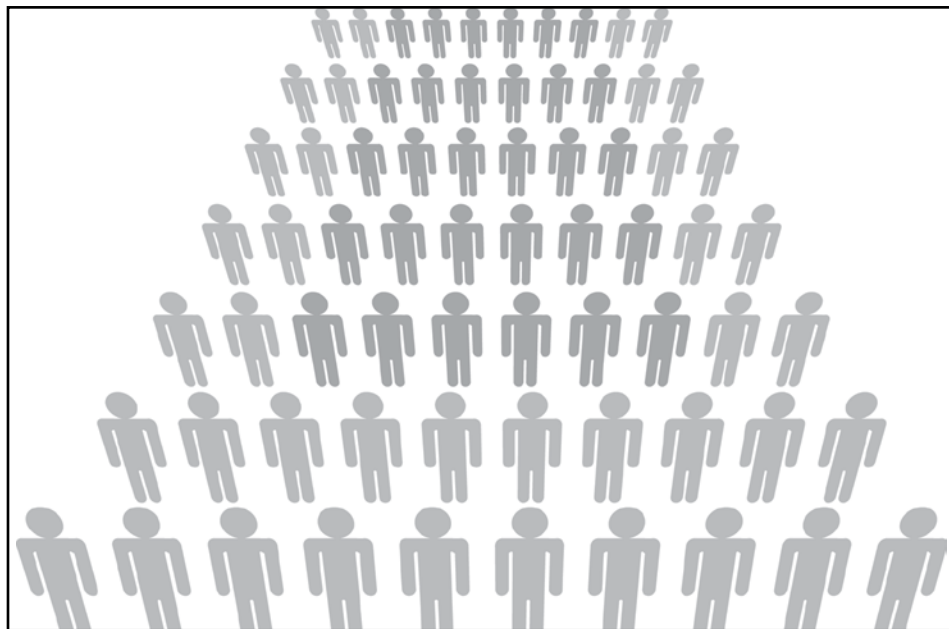
"Historically, federal funding has not been focused on regions. This is the first significant rollout of a federal philosophy of economic development that is going to be focused on regions," said Don Kirkman, president of Piedmont Triad Partnership, the organization that will manage the grant money. "When you don't have governmental structures or taxing authority organized at the regional level, it's often hard to find funding for regional initiatives."

The Labor Department took into account different factors when awarding the grants. Each region had to demonstrate a strategic partnership that is representative of its entire economy. It must also demonstrate that it has a strong team of regional leaders to implement that strategy.

Each region must also be affected by an economy in transformation because of the decline of its economic base.

"I don't know that there has been a region in the country that has been harder hit by globalization," Kirkman said. "On the basis of jobs and need, I think we made a very strong case."

More federal money could be on



the way. The Economic Development Administration recently announced that the administration's 2007 budget includes a 17 percent increase, to \$327 million, for programs operating under the initiative.

Kirkman said the partnership's annual operating budget was \$1.5 million, so the \$15 million grant represents a significant increase in financial resources.

Funding for regional economic developers such as Piedmont Triad Partnership comes from a variety of sources, since they are not tied to any one county government or municipality. Kirkman said the partnership receives funding from all 12 Triad counties, as well as the General Assembly.

While Kirkman is only taking advantage of money that's being offered, he realizes it might be difficult to justify such a huge infusion of federal funding. While no one would dispute the effect of factory closings on area workers, unemployment in the Triad nevertheless fell to 4.8 percent in December, down from 5.2 percent in November.

Unemployment rates are also falling in 11 of the 12 Triad counties.

But accountability is a major part of the competitive initiative. Kirkman said the Labor Department is assembling a technical advisory team, composed of national leaders in workforce development, to help ensure that regional economic developers are using federal funds efficiently.

"We'll be under a microscope," Kirkman said.

But there are skeptics. One of them is David Muhlhausen, a senior policy analyst in the Center for Data Analysis at The Heritage Foundation. Muhlhausen said Congress has wasted billions of dollars on ineffective job-training programs.

"This is a failed big-government model," Muhlhausen said in a phone interview. "[The programs] have not shown an ability to raise the wage level

of participants. Instead of letting people rely on themselves to improve their skills, they want to do it for them."

In an article for the Heritage Foundation, Muhlhausen took a look at the history of job-training programs.

Even the famed Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps were less than effective, considering the fact that civilian unemployment just before World War II was about the same as it was when the WPA and CCC were created. Still, support for federal job programs built after the war.

There was the 1962 Manpower Development and Training Act, the 1973 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, and the even more recent Job Training Partnership Act, which replaced CETA following charges of corruption and mismanagement. The 1998 Workforce Investment Act took over for the JTPA and emphasized more local control.

Muhlhausen was unable to find any hard evidence that job-training programs have had a positive effect on the lives of workers.

For instance, a national JTPA evaluation tracked the progress of adult men and women and male and female out-of-school youths who participated in classroom training, on-the-job training, job search assistance as well as "other services."

Adult women were the one group who saw their incomes increase, though that impact was "fleeting."

Along the same lines, a 2001 study on the Job Corps found that the estimated average increase in weekly income was never more than \$25.20 since the program was created in 1964.

Furthermore, the Job Corps also had little impact on hours worked. Participants failed to put in a full year's work, and in many cases participants actually worked less than non-participants. *CJ*

What works best

IBM Addresses Teacher Shortage and the Digital Divide

By PAIGE HOLLAND HAMP
Contributing Editor

IBM is a leader on many fronts. For North Carolinians one of the most important leadership roles emerging at IBM is the commitment to transform education. IBM has always been a strong supporter of education at the local, state, and national levels and contributes significant financial and volunteer resources to support schools and other educational initiatives.

However, now IBM is harnessing its significant technology, math, and science resources as well as its huge workforce to take on two key educational crises in the United States — the fast growing digital divide and the nationwide teacher shortage.

Every year school districts across the country struggle to fill teaching positions, and no areas are harder to recruit quality teachers than those in science and math. In September 2005, IBM launched a national initiative, Transition to Teaching, to help address this critical need. In a nutshell, Transition to Teaching encourages experienced IBM employees who are leaving the company to become fully accredited teachers.

During the pilot phase IBM will focus on New York and North Carolina. To be eligible to participate employees must have 10 years of service with IBM, a related degree, and some past experience as a tutor or volunteer in schools. Once an entrant is accepted into the program IBM provides significant support — up to \$15,000 in tuition reimbursement, and once in the classroom the new teachers have access to online mentoring and other support services for their students.

"Many of our experienced employees have math and science backgrounds and have made it clear that when they are ready to leave IBM they aren't ready to stop contributing," said Stanley Litow, president of the IBM International Foundation and vice president of IBM Corporate Community Relations. "They want to continue working in positions that offer them the opportunity to give back to society in an extremely meaningful way. Transferring their skills from IBM to the classroom is a natural for many — especially in the areas of math and science."

In his new budget, President Bush included an American Competitiveness Initiative to double government spending on basic research, extend tax breaks for company spending on research, and hire thousands of new math and science teachers for the nation's high schools. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of jobs requiring science, engineering, and technical training will increase by 51 percent through 2008.

In order to meet that demand the United States needs 260,000 additional science and math teachers in the classroom by 2008. Transition to Teaching is a prime example of how the corporate sector can infuse talent into schools and

help meet this significant need. The program is garnering strong support from key leaders, including U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, who visited IBM's North Carolina site Feb. 10 with North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr.

Burr met with U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings on Feb. 9 to discuss numerous education issues, including support of the nation's historically black colleges and the need for programs such as Transition to Teaching.

"A strong background in math and science is essential for America's young people to compete in a global economy," Burr said. "The importance of private

and public partnerships emphasizing math and science skills such as IBM's pilot program Transition to Teaching in North Carolina are critical to ensure that our students are receiving the best education possible."

Another critical education issue that IBM is working hard to address is the ever-growing digital divide. Hispanic and African-American students and students from rural areas lag behind their peers. IBM uses a series of strategies, including Black Family Technology Awareness Week, for reaching these young people.

IBM RTP campus hosted two awareness events this year, a Technology Expo at Lyon Park Community Center in Durham and an Education Summit. At the Education Summit black students from Ligon and Carroll middle schools in Raleigh visited the IBM campus.

Students participated in hands-on activities with IBM employees, such as building Lego robots and aerodynamic cars.

"The goal is to get students thinking about careers in technology and engineering," IBM spokeswoman Alise McNeill said. "This is a great opportunity to show kids the importance of science and math — in a really cool way."

Another of IBM's most successful projects is Mentorplace, an online e-mentoring program. The program targets middle-school students and matches each student with an IBM employee for one year. Last year more than 350 employees mentored 450 middle-school students.

A major focus of the program is connecting with students in rural areas. A partnership with Communities In Schools focuses students in Cumberland, Robeson, Lee, and Moore counties.

At East Lee and Robbins, students who are a part of the ESL program benefit from being matched with mentors who are bilingual and often share a cultural history.

Students at CIS Academy in Robeson are mostly Native American and are matched with mentors there.

Communities In Schools President Linda Harrill is a big fan of the partnership. "For many of these kids it is the first time they have ever left their respective counties and their first "corporate" trip," Harrill said. CJ



Parents and volunteers help Robbins Elementary students build robots (Submitted photo)

John Locke
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WHAT WE BELIEVE

The John Locke Foundation believes that our society must return to our **founding principles**:

We are a **land of liberty** where natural rights of individuals precede and supersede the power of the state.

We are a **constitutional republic** in which government power is limited and employed for the purpose of providing legitimate public goods rather than for the benefit of insiders and narrow interest groups.

We are a **free market** in which persons, individually or collectively, have the natural right to sell goods and services to willing buyers, and in which the individual pursuit of economic opportunity benefits all.

And we are a **free society** where citizens solve social problems not only through government but also by working together in families, neighborhoods, churches, charities, and other private, voluntary organizations.

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Attention City & County Officials

And others with an interest in local government issues

Here are some handy ways to track the latest news and research on local issues. Updated daily, www.LocalInnovation.org, from the Center for Local Innovation covers such subjects as local taxes and budgets, land-use regulation, privatization, transportation, and annexation. Also, the John Locke Foundation is creating regional pages within www.JohnLocke.org. The first was "JLF-Charlotte" and our newest is "JLF-Wilmington." Both are regularly updated with original articles, links and lively weblog posts and comments by local residents. "The Meck Deck," the weblog on JLF-Charlotte, is fast becoming a community meeting place. "Squall Lines," the weblog on JLF-Wilmington, is continuing that tradition. Other pages are in the planning stages — so stay tuned!

John
LOCKE
FOUNDATION

CHARLOTTE

Course of the Month

All for <0.02% of students

This month's column anticipates a host of future winners from North Carolina State University. It seems that six individuals of the N.C. State community — out of not only the 30,000 or so students, but also faculty, lecturers, adjuncts, administrators, and staff members across campus — are also "Members of the NCSU Transgender/Gender Queer Community." That means (and longtime observers of American higher-education trends have already guessed this) that N.C. State needs "Transgender in the Curriculum."

The quotations are from a recently completed "Transgender Needs Assessment" conducted for N.C. State at the initiation of its Division of Student Affairs. In keeping with the dispassionate analysis that academe is noted for, N.C. State directed one of its six "trans/gender queer" individuals, Jami Taylor, a Ph.D. student whose research interests is "trans/gender queer" issues, to conduct the survey. To make the survey stronger, Taylor conducted "Supplemental Interviews" with seven "Non-NCSU" "members of the trans/gender queer community."

In the "Transgender in the Curriculum" section, Taylor notes sexuality studies programs at Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill. What did her baker's dozen "trans/gender queer" individuals think about that?

"None of the respondents in this study favored the creation of a special course for transgender concerns," Taylor reported. "None mentioned a need for a queer studies curriculum or sexuality studies minor. The transgender students interviewed at nearby universities concurred."

Taylor's summation? "These results could be biased. It is quite possible that individuals interested in sexuality studies would enroll where the programs are currently offered. They are not likely to be found at NCSU." Too bad!

Fortunately for Taylor, N.C. State has a pliable vice provost for diversity and African-American affairs, Dr. Jose Picart.

"Dr. Picart was asked about the inclusion of transgender issues in current courses," Taylor writes in academic passive voice. "He was in favor of this." Natch! CJ

John Locke Foundation research editor Jon Sanders tracks down the monthly wacky course offering.

Title IX Supporters Criticize Bush Decision

By SHANNON BLOSSER

Associate Editor

CHAPEL HILL

A controversial clarification released last year regarding Title IX released is still the center of debate regarding opportunities for women in sports and was a central theme at a recent Senate hearing on women in sports.

Supporters who testified during the hearing sought to overturn the clarification regarding the "fully and effectively" test, as well as to increase enforcement of Title IX's policies. The Senate Committee on Science, Commerce and Transportation held the hearing in February.

The clarification, issued in March of 2005, allows colleges survey student interest and participation levels to meet the "fully and effectively test." That test — one of three used to measure Title IX compliance — seeks to determine if a school has fully and effectively met the athletic needs of the student body. Other tests determine if a school has a history and continued practice of providing athletic opportunities for women and a proportionality requirement, which states that the ratio among male and female athletes should be proportional to the ratio of male and female students.

According to the clarification signed by then-Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights James F. Manning, schools would be considered in compliance with Title IX unless there is an unmet interest sufficient to sustain a varsity team, a sufficient ability to sustain an intercollegiate team, and there is a reasonable expectation competition for a team within the school's region.

Donna de Varona, a gold medal winner in swimming at the 1964 Olympics and founder of the Women's Sports Foundation, argued to committee members that the clarification creates a loophole and allows schools to avoid their responsibilities.

"The bottom line is that the policy allows schools to gauge female students' interest in athletics by doing nothing more than conducting an e-mail survey and to claim — in these days of excessive e-mail spam — that a failure to respond to the survey shows a lack of interest in playing sports," de Varona said. "It eliminates schools' obligation to look broadly and proactively at whether they are satisfying women's interests in sports, and will thereby perpetuate the cycle of discrimination to which women have been subjected."

She also added that there is "widespread non-compliance with Title IX in schools across the country." The Office of Civil Rights did not return a request to verify her statement.

"History has painted a picture of tremendous growth and acceptance of the female athlete, but she still battles the perception that girls and women are inherently less interested in sports



"It eliminates schools' obligation to look broadly and proactively at whether they are satisfying women's interests in sports, and will thereby perpetuate the cycle of discrimination."

Donna de Varona
Gold Medal Winner
1964 Olympics

than men and that providing women with opportunities cheats men out of resources," de Varona said.

Besides de Varona, the hearing including many former and current female athletes including U.S. Softball stars Dot Richardson and Jennie Finch, as well as Dominique Dawes, a member of the 1996 U.S. Olympic women's gymnastics team. Dawes, who is the current president of the Women's Sports Foundation, said that Title IX should not be weakened.

"Efforts to weaken Title IX should not be supported by Congress," Dawes said. "Our sons and daughters must have the same opportunities and encouragement to participate in sports."

Oregon women's soccer coach Tara Erickson argued that the legislation has helped to level the playing field.

"This important civil rights law has established a level of fairness and equality in athletics," she said.

Title IX was passed in 1972 as part of the Education Amendments. It says "No person in the United States shall, on

the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

During the hearing, several former female athletes and administrators argued that without Title IX women would not have the opportunities to compete as they do today. Some even argued that a recent clarification to Title IX's three-prong test only weakens the law.

Sen. Ted. Stevens, R-Ak., who chaired the hearings, said he was "appalled at the reaction that's taking place now on Title IX."

"It's sort of a replay of what went on before though. It's just another generation saying 'Hey, wait we need more money for men. You're taking money from men's programs.' It has to be shown that's not true."

The committee did not hear testimony from those who believe Title IX has served its purpose, such as representatives from the College Sports Council — a group that attempts to show where Title IX has in essence done the opposite of what it proposes by forcing schools to close programs and opportunities for men.

In previous interviews with *Carolina Journal*, Eric Pearson, executive director of the College Sports Council, said the clarification gives colleges an option instead of cutting men's programs.

"There is still work to be done toward restoring Title IX to its original intent, fairness for all student athletes," he said in April 2005.

Stevens said the committee may sponsor more hearings on Title IX. Those hearings, he said, would include representatives from the Bush Administration, the Department of Education, the U.S. Olympic Committee and others. The Olympic Committee was brought into the picture because of the International Olympic Committee's decision to drop baseball and softball as Olympic sports in 2012 because of lack of participation among the countries. No date for those hearings has been set, according to the committee's Web site.

Stevens also said advocates for more opportunities for women must realize that it may be impossible for a true 50-50 balance in funding. Sports such as football have larger budgetary needs than women's soccer, because of the size of the team, travel and other costs.

"It may vary by university," Stevens said. "You may not agree with that, but I think the division ought to be on the basis of the people who are going to participate in sports and make sure that there is equality in terms of that. If there are more women than there are men who are going to be involved in sports then they ought to get more money, and if there are less they should recognize that they should have less because there are more men involved." CJ

BOG Examines Budget Priorities in Advance of Legislative Session

By SHANNON BLOSSER
Associate Editor

CHAPEL HILL
With three months before the 2006 General Assembly short session begins, the UNC Board of Governors is trying to decide which projects the system will submit to legislators for approval.

Recently, in a work session before the monthly board meeting, members received updates on several projects and their budgets. No decisions were made on the budget appropriations. That is expected to come in April at a board meeting in Greensboro before inauguration ceremonies for UNC's new president, Erskine Bowles.

In all, seven funding proposals were discussed during the workshop. Some seek a change in budget appropriations that were approved during the budget negotiations last year.

Among those is funding for enrollment and financial aid. According to a document used during the workshop, UNC is expecting an additional 7,000 to 8,000 students system-wide. It is estimated that UNC will seek \$75 million to \$85 million in enrollment growth funding, however final numbers are expected to be presented at the April meeting. Also, need-based financial aid is estimated at \$21.1 million.

UNC is also asking for an increase in salaries for faculty members and to move salaries to the 80th percentile of

peer institutions. Moving salaries closer to that from other institutions is a goal of the UNC Office of the President, according to the document.

UNC officials had already discussed some of the projects, including the UNC Research Campus at the former Pillowtex plant in Kannapolis. The center is a venture of Dole Foods and Castle & Cooke, Inc., as well as the state of North Carolina and the University of North Carolina. UNC is proposing to seek funding to support programs by UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, UNC-Charlotte, and North Carolina A&T in this project.

UNC is also seeking a change to funding that was included in its budget request last year for a proposed Alfred E. Mann Institute for Biomedical Engineering. The center would be a project of NCSU and UNC-Chapel Hill. Mann is proposing to create an institute similar to one he funded at the University of Southern California to commercialize intellectual property. Mann is proposing a \$100 million endowment for the program with the two schools, with an additional \$78.3 million coming from the state.

In 2005, the system's budget request sought \$50 million for the project.

Other projects considered by UNC are funding for a proposed Hickory Center for Engineering Technology and HUB Contractor Business Academies. CJ

Higher Tuition Slated for Some Schools

By BRIAN SOPP
Editorial Intern

RALEIGH
Several UNC institutions proposed increases to tuition and fees for the 2006-2007 school year. The increases continue a trend that has been ongoing at UNC system schools for several years.

During the meeting of the UNC Board of Governors in November, the BOG budget and finance committee recommended limits on tuition and fee increases at universities around the state ranging from \$271 to \$451.

NC State's Board of Trustees voted Nov. 18 to raise tuition by \$325 for all students and to increase student fees by \$90.60. Trustees at UNC-Asheville approved a recommendation to increase in-state tuition by \$275 and out-of-state tuition by \$600.

At a meeting Jan. 25, UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees members unanimously approved a proposal that would raise undergraduate tuition for residents and nonresidents by \$250 and \$1,100, respectively.

Graduate tuition would be raised by \$500 and student fees would be in-

creased by \$170.05 for undergraduates and by \$166.05 for graduate students.

Although some students were displeased with the decision, trustees also passed a nonbinding resolution introduced by Student Body President Seth Dearmin that changes the trustee's tuition philosophy to add predictability and consider it to be "over the short and long term a core element."

Several schools have cited the need for increased faculty salaries, teaching assistant stipends, and financial and need-based aid as reasons for increased tuition. However, these are not the only expenditures the new proposals will cover.

In their meeting in December, trustees at UNC-Charlotte approved a proposal to increase tuition and fees by \$346. Part of the increase includes a \$50 debt service fee to help pay off the new student union.

Trustees at Appalachian State University have proposed a tuition increase of \$545 and a total tuition and fee increase of \$1,053 for on-campus students and \$740 for off-campus students even though the BOG cap allows an increase of only \$322. CJ

Commentary

Setting College Priorities

Let's be honest: East Carolina University has a reputation as a party school. The stories are all too common about the drinking that occurs in Greenville. Recently, ECU administrators have attempted to take a stand and curb some of the under-age drinking on campus.

As admirable as the move is to curb the drinking, you have to shake your head at a resolution passed last year by the school's Faculty Senate dealing with classroom discussions of alcohol. The resolution, dated Sept. 13, asked faculty members to limit discussions on drinking.

According to the resolution and background information, faculty members at ECU would often joke with students about drinking on campus and would even cancel classes or exams when they knew students would not be in attendance. Students, on the other hand, believe that the day after Halloween is an official holiday at ECU to overcome the previous night's drinking. This is obviously not the case.

The resolution says, "students have complained about instructors" and claims that "jokes about student drinking and canceling classes or exams promote drinking and insult the non-drinkers."

While the resolution aims to limit what professors can say in the classroom about drinking, it really speaks to another issue regarding students today: Today's students are more interested in a getting a piece of paper after four years than they are about learning anything while in college. Students are more concerned about the student life on campus than they are the academic profile of an institution.

That speaks to the problems with the current philosophy in academia, which believes that an open door and opportunity for all is essential to the future of higher education. This is wrong. That belief allows the marginally qualified and the unqualified to enter. When they get there, these students are not interested in learning anything of substance. They are unprepared

for the rigors of academia and ultimately take weak classes and focus the majority of their attention on drinking or other ventures.

Higher education is not for everyone. Institutions of higher learning should be places for a select few to come and learn and to advance the skills that they already have. It is not a job training center to give people a degree and skills to get a job in the global economy.

Yet, academics believe that higher education should train the workers of tomorrow. Many of the fields that are now in the realm of higher education could be better left to on-the-job training by employers. One could argue that a student who wants to manage a golf course would learn

more about golf course management by actually working at a golf course than sitting in a classroom. Students could easily gain practical real-world experience on the job, while saving space in an institution of higher education for someone who wants a more traditional liberal arts education.

Higher education should not continue the open-door policy where its admissions policies are not selective. Administrators should be more selective in the students that they admit instead of admitting everyone to promote some ill-guided

program of access and opportunity to all. When you become selective, you get the students who want to be there and push out the students who really have no desire to be in higher education.

For those students who enter college, they must be responsible and understand there is a delicate balance between classroom time and free time. The top priority for students should be to go to class and learn. Anything else on a college campus is secondary, and that includes cheering on the school's athletic teams and going out for a few beers after class. CJ

Shannon Blosser is a staff writer with the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.



Shannon Blosser

Students are more concerned about the student life on campus than they are the academic profile of an institution.

Bats in the Belltower

Seahawk Gets it All Wrong

In January, the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy published the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education's report on "The State of the First Amendment in the UNC System." In late January, a UNC campus's student newspaper wrote about it, toadying for the university system in defense of UNC's trespasses against the First Amendment.

The staff editorial, published Jan. 26 in the UNC-Wilmington *Seahawk*, offered a highly instructive example of how not call someone else's First Amendment credentials into question. Editors gave the piece the emblematic headline, "The Pope Foundation and free speech: The new Pot and Kettle."

In just the headline alone, the editors displayed confusion over or ignorance of essential facts (Pope Center vs. Pope Foundation), and they also unwittingly strengthened the case they were trying to attack. Use of the pot-and-kettle analogy has always been to suggest the one (the pot) is essentially the same as the other (the kettle). It's obvious that the *Seahawk* staff wished to say something negative about the Pope Center, but instead they actually hit upon the truth: The Pope Center's concern for free speech was essentially the same as the First Amendment's.

"So the Pope Foundation is criticizing free speech," the editorial began, failing to make two key distinctions: (1) the Pope Foundation is the philanthropy that supports the Pope Center as well as universities across the state and many other fine causes, and (2) the Pope Center is criticizing the lack of free speech at UNC.

The editors then try to build the quite ridiculous case that the Pope/FIRE study is worthless because of implied hypocrisy on the part of the Pope Center. They bungle it spectacularly. Not only do the *Seahawk* editors wind up highlighting the Pope Center's commitment to free speech, but also they expose their own ignorance of that vital liberty.

The Pope Center supported "a Christian fraternity [that sued] UNC-Chapel Hill for refusing to recognize an organization that discriminates based on religion," the editors write. That is, the Pope Center supported the First Amendment rights of the students (individuals

protected by the First Amendment) against a public university (a governmental organization bound by the First Amendment) whose chancellor defended its actions on the wrongheaded notion that there is a "tension" between the First Amendment and the Fourteenth, which UNC-Chapel Hill needed to "balance" (by completely subjugating First Amendment rights).

The Pope Center "also helped a student go after UNC-CH when in an e-mail, a professor criticized the comments the student made in her class," the *Seahawk* editors wrote. "Where was the Pope Foundation when the professor's First Amendment rights were being violated?"

The Pope Center was with the student, whose rights were the ones under attack by the government authority figure. The editors should remember the rather significant fact that the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Civil Rights ruled that the teacher, Elyse Crystall, had harassed and discriminated her student on the basis of race and sexual orientation.

"And as for the Christian fraternity, whatever happened to the separation of church and state?" the editors ask, thinking they're quoting the First Amendment. "If an organization refuses to sign an anti-discrimination clause and openly says they will not permit students of any other religion entrance into their organization, should they be permitted funding and acknowledgement by an institution of the state?"

The fact a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction against UNC-CH's attempt to prevent the fraternity from choosing its members based on religious belief should suggest to the student paper that their interpretation is likely wrong.

If the *Seahawk* wishes to opine in favor of racial and sexual harassment and discrimination by those vested with authority by the government, by all means may they proceed (in the proud tradition of *Pravda* and *Granma*). But would it be asking too much for them not to insult their readers' intelligence by pretending they're doing that in the name of free speech? CJ

Jon Sanders is research editor for the John Locke Foundation.



Jon Sanders

Muhammad Cartoons Cause Flaps at UNC-CH and University of Illinois

By SHANNON BLOSSER
Associate Editor

CHAPEL HILL

For the second time this school year, *The Daily Tar Heel*, UNC-Chapel Hill's student newspaper, is in the middle of a firestorm over content in its publication. This time the criticism comes from UNC-Chapel Hill administrators.

On Feb. 9, the student newspaper published a controversial cartoon of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, standing between what look like two windows in a mosque. The view from one window shows a Danish flag, and Muhammad is quoted as saying "They may get me from my bad side." The view from the other window shows a scene following a terrorist incident, and Muhammad says "... but they show me from my worst." Philip McFee, a UNC-Chapel Hill student, drew the cartoon.

The cartoon was immediately criticized by the UNC-Chapel Hill Muslim Student Association and also by UNC Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Margaret Jablonski.

In a letter to the editor published by the student-run newspaper, the Muslim Student Association said *The Daily Tar Heel* intended to offend when it ran the cartoon.

"The intention of bigotry was clear," the Muslim Student Association wrote in the letter. "One must question the DTH's ethics in advancing a widely protested issue to cause a riot of their own."

The Winston-Salem Journal published comments from Jablonski in which she questioned the paper's editorial decision. She said the cartoon was "hurtful" and "offensive to members of the campus community."

"Many of our national media outlets chose not to publish the original pictures or cartoons and we believe our student papers should have used the same editorial judgment," she was quoted as saying.

McFee, in his on-line blog, disagreed with Jablonski's assertion.

"Her commentary was unnecessary and uninformed, given the relation of the DTH to the [u]niversity," McFee wrote. "Her opinion is no more crucial than that of the most sophomoric blogger or enraged pundit. She is given the right to say anything, as we all are, under freedom of speech, but the mother-hen

dynamic she has taken, and its ramifications for the freedom of student organizations, is troubling."

Days after the cartoons were published, members of the Muslim Student Association held an information session on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus to explain why the cartoons were offensive and to also detail certain aspects of the Islamic faith and tradition.

This is the second time this school year the Muslim Student Association has criticized the DTH for something published in the paper. The other time came when former columnist Jillian Bades wrote a column on terrorism and Arabs. In the column, Bades wrote that she wanted all Arabs to be stripped naked and given a cavity-search at an airport.

The Muslim Student Association criticized the column, saying it was offensive to Muslim students.

UNC-Chapel Hill is not the only school to face controversy surrounding the publication of "offensive" cartoons by student newspapers. At the University of

Illinois, two editors, Acton Gorton and Chuck Prochaska, were suspended without pay for publishing cartoons offensive to Muslims in the *The Daily Illini*. Gordon and Prochaska published some of the original artwork from Danish publications that started the original controversy in the Middle East.

"This has gotten crazy," Gorton told *The New York Times*. "We did this to raise a healthy dialogue about an important issue that is in the news and so that people would learn more about Islam. Now, I'm basically fired."

The controversy at UNC and the University of Illinois comes while a lawsuit is working its way through the federal court system that should determine how much authority university administrators have in censoring student media. The case is based on a situation at Governors State University and the student newspaper, *The Innovator*. In that case, the school's dean of student affairs told the paper's publisher that the administration would review the paper before it was published.

After courts upheld *The Innovator's* freedom of press rights, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the school had the right to edit the newspaper, based upon a 1988 Supreme Court ruling that said high school officials could review newspapers. CJ

"Her opinion is no more crucial than that of the most sophomoric blogger or enraged pundit."

Philip McFee
Daily Tar Heel cartoonist
Reacting to criticism from
UNC Vice Chancellor
for Student Affairs
Margaret Jablonski

Why Not 'Deregulate' American Public Higher Education?

By GEORGE C. LEEF

RALEIGH

Supporters of the statist-quo usually recoil in anguish from the idea of deregulation. They can be counted on to try discrediting it at almost every turn. A recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* does so and prompts this essay.

In "The Lessons of Deregulation," Gordon Davies, director of the National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy, argues that the United States should not copy the "deregulation" of higher education that has occurred in New Zealand, calling it "a market experiment gone bad." That phrase caught my attention; in my view, true market experiments that go bad are rarer than alligators in the Yukon. So what was going on?

Davies notes that, beginning in 1989, New Zealand followed a policy of allowing a proliferation of post-secondary educational institutions, some of which grant degrees, some not, to tap into state funding. The idea was to encourage greater consumer choice in education. The result was an explosion of subdegree programs. In just the space of a few years, government grants to the subdegree programs went from being half of what the government was providing to degree-granting institutions to equal amounts.

The trouble is that many if not all of the subdegree (or certificate) programs are very flimsy academically. Davies provides a number of excellent examples, including funding for "Maori singalong courses," and programs in "golf studies." One polytechnic institute scammed more than \$9 million for a course that consisted of nothing more than sending students a CD for them to study at home. Davies concludes that this policy of

"deregulation" has been enormously wasteful, writing, "[T]he money in New Zealand is now spread out over so many institutions and so many programs of questionable value that support for important but high-cost programs — such as those in medicine, computer science, and engineering — is unrealistically low."

Davies is worried that similar ideas might spread to the United States. He notes that in several states, policy makers are asking for greater autonomy for public universities. "Colorado, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and others have been lured by the call of the open market," he said. Better not do it, he cautioned, at least not without making sure that the state keeps enough control to fulfill "a public agenda that meets the needs of their residents." Davies proceeds to praise Virginia because it ties "deregulation" of its institutions to commitments to "provide greater access regardless of student income, to improve retention and completion rates, to increase research support, to create partnerships with schools, and to be actively involved in economic development."

When politicians write legislation that aims at pleasant-sounding but vague objectives, they hardly ever accomplish anything. "Greater access" means trying to get a few more marginal students into college rather than into the job market on the assumption that more formal education is always better — but it isn't. "Improving retention and completion"



means efforts to keep weak students from dropping out, on the same assumption. The result is primarily to increase the number of college graduates with poor skills who will end up taking

"high school" jobs. Putting more money into "research" sounds good, but a lot of the research that goes on in our universities is of negligible value; "partnerships" with schools (government schools, that is) won't do anything to overcome the inherent flaws in government-run education; and it is mission creep to call upon universities to become involved in economic development, which will happen spontaneously without any attempted boosting.

More to the point, though, even if some or all of those policy notions worked, they would not solve the problem of higher-education dollars being drained away into academically feeble programs and courses. That started happening long before anyone was talking about "deregulation." American colleges and universities have majors such as golf course management and casino management — perfectly useful fields, but where on-the-job training has always been adequate. They also have lots of "identity" programs — women's studies, African-American studies, "Latina/o studies," and so on — that don't transmit a body of knowledge to students, but attempt to engender certain attitudes of resentment. And they have numerous vapid courses on pop culture topics. Just as in New Zealand,

great amounts of money are spent on the equivalent of educational junk food.

Why?

As Milton Friedman says, "No one spends other people's money as carefully as he spends his own." When it comes to education, students are largely spending taxpayer money when students make their choices. Davies correctly observed that students are not wise decision-makers: "Too many naive young people will opt for the offer of a free cellphone or for a 'fun' program like surfing rather than select the education that they truly need." That's undoubtedly true, and is all the more reason not to put those people in position to squander other people's money.

The recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy shows that, despite the prodigious sums lavished on education in the United States, we have a startling low level of literacy in this country, even among people who have post-graduate degrees. If parents, students, and other interested parties were putting up their own money, they would take far more care than they do now to make sure that it wasn't being wasted on educational cotton candy. Because education is mostly paid for by government, however, many students drag out their years of formal schooling, often accomplishing less in 16 years than people a century ago did in eight.

If we are serious about the waste of education dollars, we ought to focus our attention on the real problem — government funding. CJ

George Leef is executive director of the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy. Visit PopeCenter.org for more information about its programs.

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Salisbury	WSTP	AM 1490	Saturdays	11:00 AM
Siler City	WNCA	AM 1570	Sundays	6:00 AM
Southern Pines	WEEB	AM 990	Wednesdays	8:00 AM
Whiteville	WTXY	AM 1540	Tuesdays	10:00 AM
Wilmington	WAAV	AM 980	Saturdays	1:00 PM
Winston-Salem/Triad	WSJS	AM 600	Saturdays	12:00 PM

For more information, visit www.CarolinaJournal.com/CJRadio

Town and County

Bald Head vehicle fees

The N.C. Court of Appeals has upheld Bald Head Island's fee structure on vehicles with internal-combustion engines. The ruling came after several companies that do business on the resort island contended that the high fees amounted to taxes.

Bald Head Island's roads are designed to accommodate golf carts, not cars. The village charges a fee on the use of vehicles powered by internal-combustion engines. In 2002, Bald Head Island greatly raised the fees. While previously the top annual permit fee had been \$200, after the increase it went to \$2,000. Daily fees on construction vehicles and delivery vans were set at \$200.

"As the fees are based on a vehicle's weight and width, and on the duration of the permit, we conclude that they are squarely within the legislative grant of power to assess fees based on 'criteria that bear upon the Village's costs,'" Judge Robin Hudson wrote for the court.

"Furthermore, in the amended Charter, the General Assembly explicitly stated that the fees must be used to finance 'the establishment and maintenance' of the Village's roads. Accordingly, we conclude that the Village has not exceeded its statutory authority."

No to dentistry/day spa

The latest trend is to combine dentistry and day spas, a dentist recent told High Point City Council. The council was apparently not impressed by the combination of services, for it turned down a request to modify city zoning to facilitate the combination, the *News & Record* of Greensboro reports.

"Combining traditional medical treatments with more non-traditional means of therapy is an emerging trend," dentist Dr. Joel Gentry told the council. "Many dentists are referring some of their patients to spa treatments or giving them complimentary spa services in some means."

Gentry has a practice on Lexington Avenue in an area zoned as a limited office business district. Vita Bella wanted to operate a day spa in Gentry's building, but it was unable to get a business license because the zoning classification doesn't allow massage-type businesses.

"This is not a slope we want to start in on," said Councilman Bill Bencini. CJ

Funeral Home in Eminent-Domain Fight in Durham

By DONNA MARTINEZ

Associate Editor

As Durham County prepares to force a century-old, African American-owned funeral home to vacate a downtown city block and make way for a new courthouse, a county commissioner who voted against the taking says he thinks counties might have too much eminent-domain power over citizens.

Commissioner Michael Page said he understands that the location of Scarborough and Hargett Funeral Home, Inc. is the ideal site for the courthouse because it is adjacent to the existing detention center and increases safety for criminal justice workers and citizens in the area. County plans call for a new 225,000-square-foot courthouse to be built on the business's site and connected to the jail by underground tunnel. Still, Page said, "This was poor planning on somebody's behalf and I don't think Mr. Scarborough should have to suffer as a result of poor planning." A U-Haul business next to the funeral home is also targeted for government removal.

Page, who is also executive director of United Christian Campus Ministry at North Carolina Central University and the pastor at Antioch Baptist Church in Durham, said he asked county officials about other sites and was told that an alternative on Main Street had been considered but that it didn't measure up.

Scarborough and Hargett has occupied two acres at 306 S. Roxboro St. since 1974. It is a five-generation, family-owned and operated enterprise. J.C. "Skeepie" Scarborough, III, president/CEO and great-grandson of the founder, is fighting the county's action.

Scarborough's grandfather became a funeral director in 1905 after watching a white-owned funeral home refuse to put his family's deceased friend in the customary horse-drawn hearse. African Americans were relegated to the funeral home's basement and a horse-drawn wagon. "So my grandfather said, 'well then, I'll open up my own business to give my people dignity in death,'" Scarborough said. "So our motto is a dignified service in a sympathetic way."

The county's plan is galling to Scarborough for historical and financial reasons.

This isn't the first time his business has made way for public development. After making several moves in its early history, the Scarborough business was uprooted by the Redevelopment Commission of the City of Durham in 1968 and put in a temporary location to make way for the Durham Freeway. It took several years for Scarborough to secure financing and select the location the funeral home occupies today. "We were just about pushed here, sat here by government, and this is the irony," he said.

Scarborough vividly remembers



Scarborough & Hargett Funeral Home in Durham, shown here with the Durham County Jail building in the background, is involved in a contentious eminent domain case. The county wants to build a new courthouse on the site. (Submitted photo)

eyeing the site with his father more than 30 years ago. He takes offense at those who contend he knew he would eventually be required to leave the prime downtown Durham location. "I said that's a blatant lie, because if my father had known when he drove up on this property and sat here over two hours and I was trying to persuade him, if my father had known that...he would have kept driving off the property."

It's this history that contributed to Page's vote against the county taking the Scarborough property through eminent domain. The family's well-known community contributions also swayed Page. Scarborough has served on the board of Mechanics and Farmers Bank in Durham since 1968.

Sitting in his conference room surrounded by family portraits and mementos, he proudly points out that his grandfather was the first black licensed funeral director and embalmer in North Carolina, and that the business is the oldest black funeral home in the state. Last year the family conducted funerals for nearly 300 people.

But the Scarborough family's business and personal history wasn't, and shouldn't, be a factor in the county's decision, according to Commissioner Lewis Cheek, who voted for the eminent-domain action and has practiced condemnation law for 25 years. In fact, Cheek said, if he or his family had owned the desired property, he still would have voted against his personal interest and for what he viewed was best for all. "It's a tough decision, but tough decisions come with the territory and if you're not willing to make difficult decisions, then you don't belong in government," Cheek said of his Scarborough vote.

Scarborough said he's willing to go to jail to prevent the taking of his business

for less than what he thinks it's worth. The law requires the county to provide just compensation, but Scarborough disputes the county's appraisal and says it doesn't come close to what his "prime, prime property" is worth. "I told them they're sick, they're crazy," said Scarborough. "I want fair, fair market value to make a person whole. If you move them out, make sure they have enough to recoup, to go back into business if they want to," he said. "I keep hearing the word 'giving.' I don't want anybody to give me anything. Pay me."

Page is sympathetic but says paying Scarborough more than fair market value is an abuse of taxpayer dollars. He predicts the case will end up in court, with the public weighing in against the county, which will be viewed as "picking on" Scarborough and his family. Cheek is adamant the county has been fair in its negotiations based on the appraisal method accepted in North Carolina law. He declined to reveal the county's offer but emphasized that fair market value is the legal definition of just compensation.

Regardless of the outcome, the Scarborough case has other business owners worried. Scarborough says executives at two neighboring car dealerships have contacted him to discuss his predicament and their future. "They feel that within another 10 to 20 years, somebody will be at them, too," he said. Both Page and Cheek say they are unaware of any county plans to take other property in the area.

Although his head is enmeshed in financial documents and legalities related to the property fight, Scarborough's heart is clearly committed to his family's legacy. "This is an institution, and based on what it was built for, I don't see stopping." CJ

Closing the YAP

Ex-Youth Leader Faces Charges

By KAREN WELSH
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH
Several nonprofit, county, and state agencies are waiting to recoup a total of \$125,000 in funds missing from the now-defunct Youth Assistance Program of Cleveland County.

A review by the N.C. State Auditor's Office in 2004, and a followup year-end report in December 2005 blames former Executive Director Pam Greene for the shortfall.

"A finding equals a problem," said Dennis Patterson, spokesman for the Office of the State Auditor. "Anytime you have a finding, it's never a good situation, and, (YAP of Cleveland County) had many findings."

In January, a Cleveland County grand jury charged Greene with 10 counts of embezzlement. Assistant District Attorney Katherine Sawyer is handling the prosecution, but she refused to comment because the case is still pending.

However, the *Shelby Star* newspaper reported that Greene said she did not commit any crimes. "I will say I'm innocent," Greene told the newspaper. "But on the advice of my attorney, I cannot comment further at this time."

The report, originally released by State Auditor Ralph Campbell Jr. in November 2004, said many allegations and complaints of mismanaged funds for the youth program, situated at the time in Shelby, were received on the State Auditor's Hotline.

Not only was a significant amount of money missing from YAP through undocumented cashed checks, falsified mileage reports, and duplicate expense receipts to the Governor's Crime Commission for reimbursement; other discrepancies were found as well.

The investigation of the program's records from Jan. 1, 2001 to June 4, 2004 also found that Greene reported inflated results to the Governor's One-on-One Volunteer Program and used the funding for positions that did not exist.

Greene also contracted with family members who did not meet the educational requirements as described in a grant given by the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention-Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

The audit also showed that Greene paid her daughter, Tristan Reynolds, for parenting classes she did not facilitate through funds given by the Cleveland County Department of Social Services.

Greene also paid her family members' personal expenses with United Way Basic Needs Grant Funds.

United Way of Cleveland County Director Tom Hassell said he hopes to get back some of thousands of dollars United Way gave to YAP. "Our posture has been one of watchful waiting," he

Fast Facts From the Audit

The following schedule represents a quantification of the items examined during the state auditor's special review:

1. Questionable checks and withdrawals from Jan. 1, 2001 to May 31, 2004 — \$37,177.78
 2. Questionable purchases using debit and credit cards from July 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004 — \$10,824.69
 3. The YAP inflated results to the Governor's One-On-One Volunteer Program — \$39,000
 4. Questionable mileage reports proposed by the executive director's daughter — \$990.40
 5. Yearly salary of the executive director's daughter — \$30,512
 6. Administrative assistant position funding paid to employees — \$6,557.03
 7. Cooperative Co-Parenting Program fees collected, but not deposited — \$730.00
 - 8.
- TOTAL: \$125,792.40**

Source: Office of the North Carolina State Auditor

said. "We are still waiting for the official announcement. Hopefully, at some point there will be an opportunity for organizations to recover funds."

Renee Hoffman, director of Public Affairs for the Governor's Crime Commission, said her organization sent a letter of intent in March 2005 stating commission members want repayment for funds sent to YAP.

Cleveland County Manager David Dear said the local government might be responsible to pay restitution for this "very unfortunate incident," but county officials are waiting for the matter to work its way through the court system.

The state auditor's document also found some of the funding organizations at fault. The report found that officials of the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Governor's One-on-One Volunteer Program failed to monitor the youth program because, if they had, the shortfalls might have been detected at an earlier date, or prevented from ever happening.

"The last time YAP underwent a monitoring review was in 1999 and the report has since been archived or destroyed," the report said. "The Acting State Director said it was an error on their behalf that YAP had not been monitored since 1999."

"There needs to be checks and balances," Dear said. "We've already started doing trainings for board of directors, to improve each board's oversight for non-profits."

In the end, Hassell said, the young people are the real losers in the scandal.

"(YAP) was doing good things," he said. "It's fair to say that not having their organizational presence in the community is a loss." CJ

Commentary

Gauging Government Success

One of the more remarkable aspects of local government is often the inability of the public or private sector to adequately understand how to gauge the success or effectiveness of it. Nothing illustrates this better than the annual *By The Numbers* report issued by the Center for Local Innovation. This report summarizes the various expenditures by city and county and divides that into existing populations.

The first criticism is always that the report isn't comparing "apples to apples." The second comment usually comes from folks who want to justify their expenses as a quality-of-life issue such as parks and recreation

or a senior services center. That service increases cost, but the tradeoff is worth it, at least in their minds.

The real question should be, "Is what we're doing worth it?" This particular question can be answered by only you and your neighbors. You see, there is a long list of services that the general statutes consider to be "optional." They are: water and sewer, solid-waste collection, fire protection, ambulance and rescue services, hospital, airport, planning, community development, recreation, library, historic preservation, community appearance, and human relations.

Many could argue the private sector can provide such services. But few would argue that such services should be entirely removed from the public sector. Quality-of-life issues are difficult to measure with respect to effectiveness and efficiency. How do you measure the success of historic preservation or human relations? You can try, but ultimately, you have to feel that it's worth it.

The *By The Numbers* report is overly simplistic in that way. It also falls short of finding a way in which to compare resort and beach areas to largely rural areas whose populations and tax bases are far more stable. Beaches make it difficult to assess property-tax burdens, as they tend to have few actual residents and many owners that live out of town.

Thus all the properties are

paying taxes, but in the report that tax burden is divided by the residents only. This makes counties such as Dare look like expensive places to be relative to local government.

But this report also illustrates the difficulty faced by counties such as Stokes, Bertie, Columbus and other rural counties that don't have rapidly expanding tax bases or increasing populations. In fact, many rural counties have more than half of their property under deferment programs that generate little, if any, taxes. They also get hit with higher numbers of folks receiving assistance.

In 2002, folks paid 4.14 percent of their incomes to local taxes and fees, in 2003 that rose to 4.35 percent, and in 2004 it rose once again to 4.65 percent. It could easily top 5 percent once the numbers are in for 2005. That means that the cost of local government is rising relative to folks' incomes.

North Carolina is a remarkable state; having traveled from coast to mountains many times, one becomes enamored of the spirit of its people. Having lived in several states, there is nothing like being here. The culture and pride that thrives within all of the small and large towns in this state still calls back to the days of fresh lemonade stands and dealing with local problems with local folks and churches.

Now is a wonderful time for the leadership of the state to realize that local leadership might well do us all some good. Help to restore local control and simplify our taxation policies.

In doing so, we might well find a way to more adequately compare the successes in local government all across this great state. For now, it seems, there are plenty of excuses for why government costs so much, "You see, our town is just different." CJ

Chad Adams is vice chairman of the Lee County Board of Commissioners, John Locke Foundation vice president for development, and director of the Center for Local Innovation. Visit www.LocalInnovation.org.



Chad Adams

Local Innovation Bulletin Board

Sprawl: An Economic Phase

Opponents of urban sprawl argue that it is a recent phenomenon limited to America, the result of destructive public policies. A new book by Robert Bruegmann, *Sprawl: A Compact History*, however, argues that urban sprawl is a natural part of a city's growth.

Bruegmann says that cities throughout the world and throughout time have had sprawl. During the Ming dynasty in the 1400s, the Chinese gentry sang the praises of the exurban life. Ancient Romans lived in the rustic "villa suburbana."

Modern sprawl happened in Europe first — London's population density peaked in the early 19th century; in Paris it happened in the 1850s; and in New York City in the early 1900s.

Bruegmann argues that urban sprawl occurs when cities reach a level of economic maturity. As citizens become wealthier, they desire more space and to own their own homes. With more money, they can purchase better transportation, which includes the automobile.

Today, this trend is not isolated to America, Bruegmann notes:

Despite some of the most stringent anti-sprawl regulations in the world and high gas prices, the population of Paris has declined by almost a third since 1921, while its suburbs have grown.

Barcelona, considered by many a model compact city, has developed extensive suburbs and has experienced the largest population loss of any European city in the last 25 years.

More consolidation

Small towns in Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and other states are trimming costs by combining police and fire departments, school districts and other agencies in a new wave of government consolidation, *USA Today* reports.

The moves mainly involve briskly growing suburban communities whose boundaries bump up against neighboring towns that provide the same services with their own tax dollars. Others are small rural towns that can no longer afford separate police, fire, and school districts.

Richland Township, a community of 10,500 north of Pittsburgh, and three nearby townships are creating a regional police force with 30 full-time officers. The effort could save Richland more than \$100,000 a year.

Chelmsford, Mass., a town of 34,000 near Boston, is mulling a merger of its fire stations, elementary schools, and other government functions to ease a budget shortfall of more than \$3 million.

Since the 1960s, about 100 proposals for wholesale city-county consolidations have been put to voters across the nation, according to the National League of Cities. Only about one-quarter of those measures passed. The number of communities that have pursued smaller unions, such as combining police departments, is more difficult to gauge.

The pressure for consolidation often comes when there are real fiscal constraints, says Donald Borut, executive director of the National League of Cities, but there has to be strong political will on the part of citizens and leadership to do it.

Limits up prices

Since 1970, Washington, D.C., and other coastal cities where housing prices have exploded have seen "a significant increase in the ability of residents to block new projects," transforming vast swaths of the cities into "homeowners' cooperatives" that are no longer open to growth, says economist Edward L. Glaeser in a National Bureau of Economic Research paper.

The explosion in house prices ironically has occurred in areas where the price of housing was already high, making homeownership increasingly unaffordable. The cost of housing remained reasonable and affordable throughout the vast interior of the country.

Before 1970 home prices in Washington and the rest of the country mostly reflected the cost of acquiring land and building on it. Now, construction costs represent half or less of a new or existing home's price in high-cost cities, Glaeser and his colleagues found.

The increasing power of homeowners to block construction, forcing buyers to bid up the prices on the few homes available, is only partly a result of steady growth in the portion of the population that owns homes.

It also is a result of the increasing willingness of homeowners to use that status through political activism and the courts to maintain low density, green spaces, and other amenities in their neighborhoods, at the expense of newcomers, the researchers found. CJ

From Cherokee to Currituck**State to Re-Examine Rules On Coastal Building Curbs**

By MICHAEL LOWREY
Associate Editor

RALEIGH

A panel will re-examine state rules on building restrictions in coastal areas. Current regulations have made many lots unbuildable and hindered redevelopment on some barrier islands.

"We're not happy with our method," Courtney Hackney, chairman of the 15-member Coastal Resources Commission said to *The News & Observer* of Raleigh. "It may be that one size does not fit all, when it comes to that rule."

Under current regulations, whether and what sort of structure can be built on a lot is determined by the distance from the first line of established vegetation and local erosion rates. The location of the line of established vegetation is not permanent, because storms can wash away beaches, dunes, and houses, turning lots that once could be built upon unbuildable.

A point of contention is how to treat beach renourishment. The rules currently don't consider renourished beach in establishing building setbacks, under the theory that what man creates, the ocean can reclaim. Many local officials and property owners want state rules to consider renourished beaches like natural beaches if they support vegetation.

Todd Miller, executive director of the N.C. Coastal Federation, said he thinks that using variances to address individual cases is a better solution than a wholesale rule change.

"Our concern is, once we open this up, there is a lot of pressure to use renourishment to make unbuildable lots buildable on the oceanfront," Miller said.

Mecklenburg County Park to sell naming rights?

Mecklenburg County's Freedom Park is a popular destination just outside of downtown Charlotte. Among the park's attractions is a band shell, which sponsors concerts. Now a Charlotte car dealership is offering \$100,000 to the county in exchange for naming rights to the band shell.

"The park commission is fairly strapped, and when someone comes forward with an idea such as this, we listen," Park and Recreation Director Wayne Weston said to *The Charlotte Observer*.

Under the proposal, Scott Clark's Toyota City would donate \$20,000 this year and \$10,000 each of the next eight years to the Partners to Parks program. In exchange, the dealership would put



One size may not fit all when it comes to coastal development rules, says a member of the Coastal Resources Commission

up four signs announcing its sponsorship. Park and Recreation Department officials haven't approved the sign's size or design, though they have said the signs would be tasteful.

While companies have previously sponsored events at county parks, and other county buildings and greenway segments have been named for donors and volunteers, Mecklenburg County does not have a formal policy on the sale of naming rights. Officials are drafting a policy, which would require the approval of county commission.

No TIF proposals yet offered for state approval

More than a year since North Carolina voters barely approved Amendment One, allowing localities to engage in tax increment financing, no proposals to use TIFs have come before the state for approval, the *Winston-Salem Journal* reports. It could be awhile before a project does.

"There wasn't, at least from our perspective, an expectation of a flood of these requests once Amendment One passed. But I am a little surprised that there hasn't been more activity," said Tim Romocki, acting director of the state and local finance division of the N.C. Treasury Department.

In a TIF, a locality and developer enter into an agreement about a specific project. Bonds are issued to pay for infrastructure improvements for the projects. The additional property tax revenue that arises in an area around the project is used to repay the bonds.

"As much money as was spent on the campaign, and the urgency of getting former governors Hunt and Holshouser involved in its passage, you would have thought at least one or two projects would have used it by now," said Bob Orr, former N.C. Supreme Court justice who heads the N.C. Institute for Constitutional Law.

"I guess nobody wants to be the guinea pig." CJ

State Planning Millions in Grants for Minority Health

By MIKE ROUSE
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

The state plans to give grants of up to half a million dollars to government agencies or nonprofit corporations that can devise suitable plans to improve the health of North Carolina residents.

Among the requirements are:

- The organization asking for the money must have a record of successful projects to improve public health.
- It must submit a clean audit report.
- The measures described in its grant proposal must be ones that have proven to be effective.
- The beneficiaries must be minorities. It will be all right if some whites happen to benefit, but the emphasis is on other races.

The money — \$8.9 million altogether — was ponied up by the N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund. That is one of the agencies that were established by the General Assembly to receive and spend money from the 1998 settlement between states and four cigarette manufacturers.

Part of the settlement money is spent for programs to help people quit smoking or discourage them from starting. Some can also be used to promote the general health of the population, which is the function of the Health and Wellness Trust Fund.

The fund is governed by an 18-member commission, composed mostly of doctors, other health professionals, and academics. Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue is the chairman.

Since 2001 when it was organized, the fund has disbursed more than \$300 million — \$127 million for health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescrip-

tion drug assistance program.

The fund proclaims that it “invests in programs and partnerships to address access, prevention, education and research that help all North Carolinians achieve better health.”

Officials of the fund say they see no discrimination in the grants for which they are now seeking proposals, which are to help equalize the health of whites and people of other races. It calls the program the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative.

Alison K. McLaurin, a spokeswoman for the Health and Wellness Trust Fund, said in an interview that proposed projects would not be denied grants just because they would aid whites as well as members of other races. She said that whites in poor socio-economic conditions are among those who are on the short end of health disparities.

But the ethnic nature of the project is clear in the call for grant proposals.

It cites the 2003 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Report Card, published by the North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities. The fund says the Report Card showed that “African American, Native American and Latino population groups experience the greatest disparities in most areas of health status” between 1997 and 2001.

The report said that blacks were 1.2 times more likely to die of heart disease than were whites, and American Indians

were 1.3 times more likely. It cited similar ratios for diabetes, prostate cancer, breast cancer, and stroke.

In addition to those diseases, the Health and Wellness Fund lists obesity and cardiovascular diseases as targets for the grant proposals.

An organization or agency applying for a grant can ask for up to \$50,000 for a planning period that can span the last six months of 2005. It can ask for up to \$450,000 to finance the program itself, which might require up to three years to implement.

Government health programs specifically targeting minority races are not new, and they are not confined to state government, al-

though North Carolina got an early start. The state’s Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities has existed in the Department of Health and Human Services for 14 years.

The office operates on a budget of more than \$1 million a year. Last year the General Assembly gave it a one-time appropriation of \$2 million extra to distribute to agencies around the state as a “Community-Focused Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative.”

A spokesman for the office, Leslie Brown, said grants have been approved for 15 county health departments and 45 nonprofit organizations. They range from about \$5,000 for a planning grant to about \$50,000 for an implementation grant.

The state secretary of Health and Human Services, Carmen Hooker-Odom, has made it one of her goals to eliminate the disparities in health statistics among the races. She assigned the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to coordinate efforts among the other divisions in the department.

Elsewhere, the National Institutes of Health, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has an agency that focuses on nothing else. It is called the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities, and it operates on a budget of about \$200 million a year.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta has reorganized its Office of the director to create an Office of Minority Health.

Many states have followed the trend by financing programs that are aimed at improving the health of people of races other than whites.

Foundations are funding research, and universities have produced papers advocating such programs and defending them against criticism that race-based programs are an inappropriate use of public money.

No critics — at least none audible to ordinary people — have questioned the government’s statistics on race and diseases. But there have been other suggestions for what to do about it.

For example, Christopher H. Foreman Jr. of the Brookings Institution has suggested that “the African-American community must become ever more engaged by, and anchored within, the private sector.”

It is there, in the private world, Foreman wrote, that there is wealth “from which flows both an enlarged collective voice and expanded personal choice.”

CJ

Grants have been approved for 15 counties and 45 nonprofit organizations, ranging from \$5,000 for a planning grant to about \$50,000 for an implementation grant.

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From the Liberty Library

• When a *National Review* colleague teased writer Rod Dreher one day about his visit to the local food co-op to pick up a week's supply of organic vegetables ("Ewww, that's so lefty"), he started thinking about the ways he and his conservative family lived that put them outside the bounds of conventional Republican politics. Shortly thereafter Dreher wrote an essay about "crunchy cons," people whose "Small Is Beautiful" style of conservative politics often put them at odds with GOP orthodoxy, and sometimes even in the same camp as lefties outside the Democratic mainstream. The response to the article was impassioned: Dreher was deluged by e-mails from conservatives across America — everyone from a pro-life vegetarian Buddhist Republican to an NRA staffer with a passion for organic gardening — who responded to say, "Hey, me too!" In *Crunchy Cons*, Dreher reports on the depth and scope of this phenomenon, which "is redefining the taxonomy of America's political and cultural landscape." Learn more at www.randomhouse.com/crown.

• Martin Gilbert tells the story of Winston Churchill's connection to America in *Churchill and America*. Churchill's mother was the daughter of an American entrepreneur, and the British prime minister spent much of his 70 adult years in close contact with the United States. In two world wars, his was the main British voice urging the closest possible cooperation with the United States. Gilbert was appointed Churchill's official biographer in 1968 and has ever since been collecting archival and personal documentation that explores every twist and turn of Churchill's relationship with the United States. See www.simon-says.com for more information.

• Based on a decade of research and on interviews with many of Mao's close circle in China who have never talked before — and with virtually everyone outside China who had significant dealings with him — *Mao: The Unknown Story* is "the most authoritative life of the former Chinese dictator ever written." Authors Jung Chang and Jon Halliday show Mao was not driven by idealism or ideology. He schemed, poisoned and blackmailed to get his way and after conquering China in 1949, his secret goal was to dominate the world. In chasing this dream he caused the deaths of 38 million people. More information at www.randomhouse.com. CJ

Higher education takes a hit

Declining By Degrees Should Be Summer Reading

• Edited by Richard H. Hersh and John Merrow: *Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk*; Palgrave Macmillan; 2005; 244 pp; \$24.95

By **GEORGE C. LEEF**
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

Books critical of higher education in America used to be written almost exclusively by "outsiders" who were armed with well-sharpened philosophical axes — Dinesh D'Souza and Charles Sykes, for example. Today, however, we are starting to find critical books coming from educational centrists. Evidently the decay is now so unavoidable that even "insiders" can't keep quiet about it. That, by itself, is encouraging.

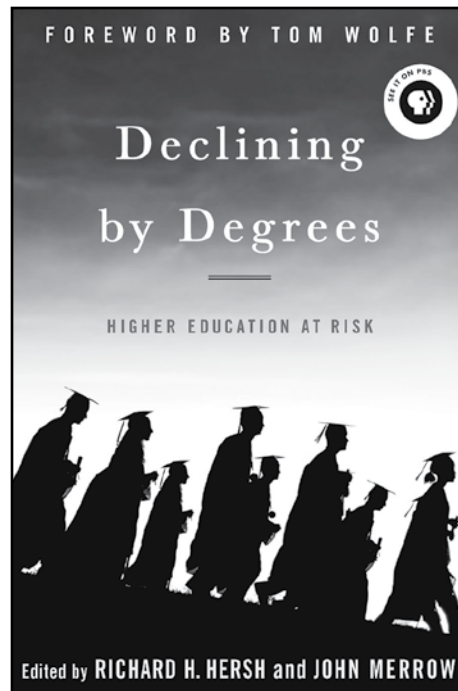
Declining by Degrees is a compilation of 15 essays, all by individuals who would not be considered opponents of our higher-ed system. The book's editors, Hersh and Merrow are, respectively, a former college president and a former teacher who often reports on education for NPR. This is undeniably a "mainstream" project (a PBS documentary was made to accompany it!) and ought to open a lot of eyes to the waste and folly that is widespread in our colleges and universities.

In their introduction, Hersh and Merrow write, "Higher education, long viewed as the crown jewel of American education, is tarnished.... We found an insidious erosion of quality that we now believe places this nation at risk." American K-12 education, they aver, "continues to wallow in mediocrity" and "the rot is creeping upward" into colleges and universities. Strong words, but the essays that follow support them.

In the first essay, Gene Maeroff, a senior fellow at Teachers College, Columbia University, observes that most reporting on higher education is weak and ill-serves the public. "Higher education's weaknesses and shortcomings," he writes, "remain largely out of sight to reporters, many of whom are quick to seize on almost any foible at the elementary and secondary level. In other words, higher education is Teflon-coated, remarkably immune to criticism."

James Fallows, national correspondent for *Atlantic Monthly*, contributes an excellent essay, "College Admissions: A Substitute for Quality?" Fallows wonders why there is such a do-or-die emphasis on getting into an elite institution "since there is so little demonstrable connection between the selectivity of the school a student attends and that student's long-term success or satisfaction in life."

That's an important and rarely appreciated point. The value of a college education depends vastly more on the efforts of the student than on the prestige



of the institution. A crucial implication of that is that the furious dispute over "affirmative action" is quite pointless, but Fallows does not make the point.

The Washington Post's excellent education reporter, Jay Mathews, contributes one of the book's strongest essays, "Caveat Lector: Unexamined Assumptions about Quality in Higher Education."

He advises students and parents to read the claims colleges and universities make about their great commitments to learning with considerable skepticism and that is because there is no real evidence on the extent to which schools actually educate. He writes that colleges "insist that what they do has to be good because their professors have fine reputations and their graduates go on to successful careers." The trouble, of course, is that professors with fine reputations often do very little teaching and that the students would probably have gone on to successful careers anyway.

Carol G. Schneider, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, focuses on the decline of liberal education, observing, "From the Ivy league to the nation's growing system of two-year colleges, the academy has lowered its sights for liberal education from the entire college curriculum to that small fraction of the undergraduate experience known as general education."

Vartan Gregorian, former president of Brown University and current president of the Carnegie Corporation, agrees with Schneider that liberal education is largely neglected. "Education must help us understand the sweep of our culture, the achievements, the problems, the solutions, and the failures that mark our history." If students have received little or none of the broadening and deepening of the intellect that comes with a liberal education, he fears

that the result will be "an even greater temptation to abdicate judgment in favor of expert opinion."

David Kirp, who teaches public policy at Berkeley, laments, "Because of the generally shabby quality of undergraduate education, the United States is not getting the educated citizenry that is required if the country is going to stay competitive." And Murray Sperber, who has twice spoken at Pope Center events, reveals the nasty secret of many campuses — that there is a "nonaggression pact" between the students and faculty members.

The deal is that students get high grades and an undemanding workload in return for not expecting much attention from their professors. He sets forth several excellent ideas for reform, including the establishment of a system for rewarding professors either for research or teaching excellence. (Currently, teaching counts for almost nothing.)

Sports writer Frank Deford contributes a fine essay, "America's Modern Peculiar Institution," wherein he discusses the harm that is done by the excessive attention paid to college athletics. Arthur Levine follows with "Disconnects Between Students and Their Colleges." He says students tend to desire more contact with their professors, while professors want to limit student contact, and that students want more emphasis on teaching while professors are far more interested in doing research.

After two weak essays dealing with "diversity" issues, the book concludes with two fine ones. Julie Johnson Kidd's "It is Only a Port of Call," correctly observes that college attendance has become a "credentialing process," that has "little relationship to education at all." She quotes a German student who had seen American college life first-hand and said that the only thing on American students' minds seems to be where to find a party.

And Bard College President Leon Botstein (also a well-known musician) concludes the book in a minor key: "Although more Americans are completing more years of formal schooling than ever before, including time in college, we find ourselves confronted, it seems, despite more exposure to learning, with an absence of progress in these areas."

Declining by Degrees paints a distinctly unflattering portrait of higher education in the United States. Everyone who plays a role in policy should read it. Everyone who has children in college or who will be attending college in the future should read it. In fact, it would be quite useful for students themselves to read it. UNC ought to consider making it a "summer reading" book. CJ

George C. Leef is executive director of the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

Penelope Barker's 'Edenton Tea Party' Inspired Defense of Liberty

Many Americans have heard of the Boston Tea Party of 1773. Far fewer can tell of the Edenton Tea Party of 1774. I can count a few, but I have some fingers left.

During the Revolution era, Edenton, N.C. was a hotbed of political debate. After about 50 men, dressed as Indians, boarded three ships on Dec. 16, 1773, and dumped tea in the Boston, Mass. harbor to protest imposing trade legislation, many North Carolinians approved. In 1774, the North Carolina province passed nonimportation resolves to protest British trade regulation. That year at tea parties, a fashionable form of entertainment, polemics and ardent gesturing no doubt heated the rooms and hallways of Edenton. Soon, an unforeseen defense of liberty occurred there.

It is unknown whether the Edenton Tea Party was planned. What is known is that Penelope Barker, the dynamic wife of Thomas Barker, treasurer of the Province of North Carolina, organized

a seemingly innocuous tea party. But, I think she was the brilliant mastermind of what happened there on Oct. 25, 1774.

With aplomb, Barker probably convinced 47 to 51 women to stop drinking tea and buying English clothes and to sign the following petition:



Dr. Troy Kickler

The Provincial Deputies of North Carolina, having resolved not to drink any more tea, nor wear any more British cloth, many ladies of this province have determined to give memorable proof of their patriotism, and have accordingly entered into the following honourable and spirited association. I send it to you to shew your fair countrywomen, how zealously and faithfully, American ladies follow the laudable example of their husbands, and what opposition your matchless Ministers may expect to receive from a people thus firmly united against them.

We cannot be indifferent on any occasion that appears nearly to affect the peace and happiness of our country, and . . . it is a duty which we owe, not only to our near and dear connections, . . . but to ourselves. . . .

The petition shocked the British and loyal colonists. London magazines labeled the Edenton women uncontrollable, and mezzotint caricatures

abounded. While visiting London, North Carolina Royalist Arthur Iredell was vexed after hearing the news of the tea party. In a letter to his brother James, he sardonically asked: "Pray are you becoming patriotic? . . . Is there a Female Congress at Edenton, too?"

Truth is many times disguised as humor, as evidenced by the rest of Iredell's letter: "If the Ladies, who have ever, since the Amazonian Era, been esteem[e]d the most formidable Enemies, if they, I say, should attack us, the most fatal consequence is to be dreaded. So dextrous in the handling of a dart, each wound they give is mortal . . . The more we try to conquer them, the more we are conquered."

Although there was no dumping of tea into the ocean, the petition penned at the Edenton Tea Party was nothing less than a bold display of patriotism and love of liberty.

During the early 1770s, Whiggish men (those who supported the colonies) sometimes blamed their spouses, mothers, sisters, and daughters for preventing the creation of a distinct American culture. They would rather annul an American boycott, the story goes, than divorce English tea or clothes. The Edenton Tea Party petition proved otherwise, for the Edenton women boycotted English

goods and alerted King George III that they had done so.

The Edenton women's action was also a political first in U.S. history. Before the 1770s, women did not sign petitions. But in Edenton, politically aware women expressed publicly not only a love for their families but also for liberty and for country. Penelope Barker most likely reminded them that they played an integral part of any attempt to create a virtuous republic.

Protecting liberty requires persistent boldness, and from time to time, the unexpected. Sometimes an intrepid individual, such as Penelope Barker, needs to inspire the listless and timid among us to steadfastly defend our liberties.

See Richard Dillard, "Historic Tea Party of Edenton" in *The North Carolina Booklet* vol. 23 (Raleigh, 1926); Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, 1980); William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill, 1989); Lou Rogers Wehlitz, *Tar Heel Women* (Raleigh, 1949). CJ

Troy Kickler is director of the North Carolina History Project.

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Short Takes on Culture

Film Touches Broad Themes

• "Good Night, and Good Luck"
Warner Home Video
Directed by George Clooney

In 1954, at the height of the Cold War, newsman (and Greensboro native) Edward R. Murrow focused several episodes of his TV show "See it Now" on the excesses of Sen. Joseph McCarthy and his pursuit of alleged communists. Oscar-nominated "Good Night, and Good Luck," is a recreation of the events surrounding those shows.

Clooney has constructed a focused, nuanced film. The setting is mainly the claustrophobic, small offices and studios of CBS News. David Strathairn's dead-on portrayal of Murrow and archival footage of Sen. McCarthy propel the film (Clooney plays Murrow's producer Fred Friendly).

"Good Night, and Good Luck" has been considered by some as using the Red Scare of the 1950s as a metaphor for today's War on Terror. Though one plausible way to interpret the film, "Good Night, and Good Luck" touches on broader themes, including journalistic ethics and the inherent conflict between television as medium to entertain and inform. Murrow, you see, did more than straight news; even in its supposed 1950s heyday, television "news" devoted considerable time to celebrity — proven by the archival footage, which included an interview with Liberace about his "marriage prospects."

— MICHAEL LOWREY

'Prejudice' a worthy remake

• "Pride and Prejudice" (2005)
MCA Home Video
Directed by Joe Wright

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."

So begins Jane Austen's classic novel, *Pride & Prejudice*. Joe Wright, the most recent director to tackle Austen's most beloved tome, begins his big screen adaptation the same way. Austen devotees will delight in Wright's faithful translation from book to movie. Keira Knightley plays Lizzie Bennett to perfection; she's fiery, intelligent, and youthful. Matthew McFadyen is aloof and diffident as Mr. Darcy, yet so very enticing. When the two banter in a ballroom scene plucked directly from the pages of the novel, they are as witty and charming as ever they are in Austen's

original.

Wright couples his faith to the novel with a realism rarely seen in period romances. Pigs, chickens, and horses join the actors in most outdoor scenes; filmed entirely on location in the U.K., the streets in town are muddy and candle-soot stains the ceilings in most houses.

Lizzie Bennett's plain, coarse dresses are befitting a rural gentleman's daughter and her petticoats are rarely free of mud and dust. Wright's version of this classic Austen tale is more fresh and real than the acclaimed 1995 BBC miniseries.

Despite the realism and Austen's cutting, and humorous, commentary on society and manners, "Pride & Prejudice" is still a movie for and about women. A must-see for slumber parties, girls' nights or bonding time between mother and daughter. Girls of all ages will delight in Lizzie's wit, laugh at her sisters' antics and swoon over the eligible and consummate Mr. Darcy. I doubt it will capture a male audience in quite the same way.

— JENNA ASHLEY
ROBINSON

Free papers may force change

• Free newspapers
Distributed daily and weekly
Major Cities

North Carolina's weekly alternative newspapers — the *Rhinoceros Times*, *Independent Weekly*, and others — are great, free guides to what's happening. They are also the future.

In our nation's capital, there are now two free dailies. *The Washington Post* started *Express* as a free paper for Metro commuters. It faces competition from the *Washington Examiner*, another free tabloid. Neither paper is going to challenge the position of the real *Post* or the pay-only *Washington Times*, but they should raise warning flags for mid-sized papers such as *Raleigh's News & Observer*.

The Washington Post is a bargain at 35 cents (even less for home delivery): full of local news, sports, insightful commentary on its editorial page, and reporting of national and world news. The *N&O* is rather less useful in all of those areas even though it costs would-be readers 50-cents a copy.

Free dailies, like mass transit, may be able to function only in densely populated areas, but their success in those areas should further challenge the traditional dailies here to rethink their business models.

— JOSEPH COLETTI CJ

No detectable improvement**Bok Bursts the College Bubble**

• Derek Bok: *Our Underachieving Colleges*; Princeton University Press; 413 pp, \$29.95

By GEORGE LEEF
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

Americans are so used to hearing that their higher-education system is "the envy of the world" that most will be surprised to learn that the former president of Harvard thinks it's loaded with underachievers. He does, though, and Derek Bok's most recent book is worth scrutinizing.

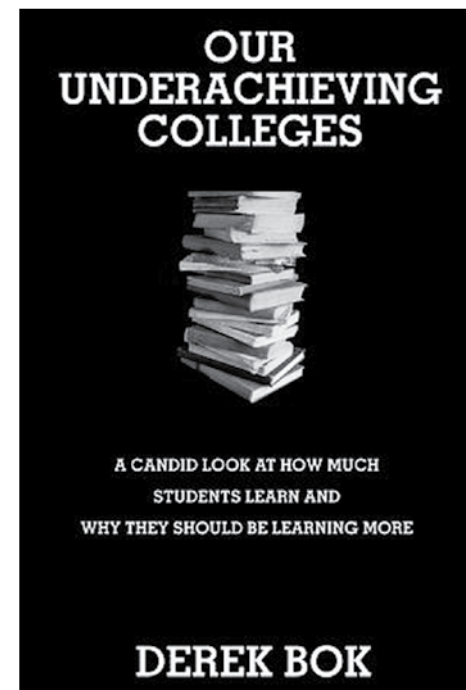
Bok, in *Our Underachieving Colleges*, doubts that, despite all the resources we lavish on higher education, there has been any detectable improvement in college education. Unlike consumer products where progress can be measured, we don't have an adequate yardstick for higher education.

"No published reports exist that reveal how much undergraduates have progressed intellectually, let alone how such progress compares across colleges," he writes. That lack of measurement means that there is little or no pressure on schools to improve. In fact, Bok contends that in some important respects they may be retrogressing.

The ability to write is a good example. Almost every college requires students to take at least one English composition course, but few can show good results. As the National Commission on Writing has found, many employers regard the writing ability of college graduates to be shockingly poor. Bok explains this serious underachievement: "Regular faculty have no professional interest in teaching composition courses and look upon them chiefly as a means to support their graduate students...and freshmen are too new to the university to complain." Writing — perhaps the most important skill any student needs to learn — is thus taught mostly by inexperienced graduate students who themselves may not be particularly adept writers.

Furthermore, English departments have become havens for radicals who want to use courses for instruction more in ideology than in good sentence structure. While Bok takes pains to distance himself from people whom he generally dismisses as polemical critics (e.g., Dinesh D'Souza), he gives support to them by correctly noting that leftists have largely taken over composition theory in order to "use language to make the public accept the oppression of women, minorities, poor people, and other exploited groups." Little wonder that kids can't write.

Bok is also on solid ground in pointing out that U.S. colleges underachieve in preparing students for citizenship. At most schools, students can graduate without ever taking a course



on the fundamentals of the American system of government. Bok suggests that colleges ought to make such courses part of a required curriculum.

Alas, other areas where Bok finds underachievement are not so much educational as sociological. He is a proponent, for example, of "service learning" courses. The idea here is that students should be able to earn credits through courses that entail doing some kind of community service and later "reflecting" on the problems they addressed. Bok believes that such courses are important because they instill "greater awareness of human needs and the inadequacies of laws and policies that affect the poor." The trouble is that the slender learning component is apt to consist of little more than conventional liberal nostrums about welfare without any consideration of the arguments that government harms the poor much more than it helps them.

The weakest part of the book is Bok's advocacy of greater campus "diversity." As is nearly always the case with diversity proponents, he greatly overestimates the benefit of having schools try to engineer a student body that "looks like America" while entirely ignoring the costs of doing so.

That sounds nice, but it's hard to see exactly what race relations problem America still has that preferential admission policies on prestige campuses can solve. Racial animosity has virtually disappeared from the United States and college students are quite unlikely to harbor any. Bok completely misses the downside of "affirmative action," namely that it brings in students of considerably different academic ability, with resulting pressure to lower academic standards. CJ

George C. Leef is executive director of the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

Private Election Funding Supported in Powerful Essays

• Edited by John Samples: *Welfare for Politicians?: Taxpayer Financing of Campaigns*; Cato Institute; 2005; 160 pp; \$18.95; (hardcover)/\$12.95 (paper)

By **BRADLEY A. SMITH**

Guest Contributor

COLUMBUS, Ohio

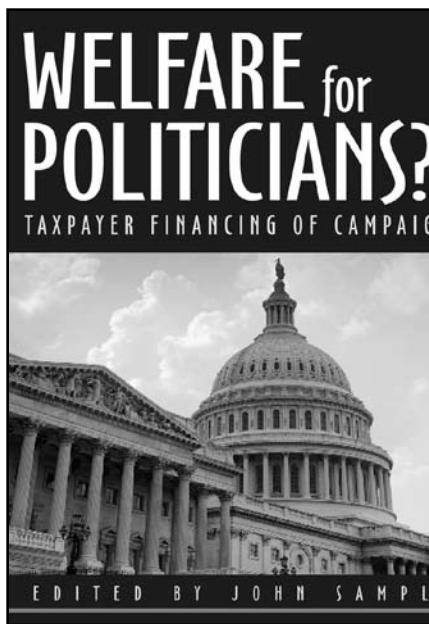
Imagine a government policy that provides benefits to all citizens who want them, but is not mandatory; which is paid for not through taxes, but through voluntary contributions; and which adds nothing to the government debt. Sound good? This is a description of the United States' traditional system of privately funded political campaigns. And the best is yet to come: The cost of the program falls almost entirely on the wealthiest Americans.

Oddly enough, it is precisely this last factor, the fact that the dissemination of political information in political campaigns is paid almost entirely by voluntary contributions from the wealthiest Americans, that spurs constant calls for "public" financing of political campaigns. According to the "reformers" who promote what are more properly called "government-" or "tax"-funded campaigns, the system of voluntary campaign funding results in both political inequality and government corruption. Officeholders ignore the common good to bend to the will of their contributors, and contributors exercise unequal, or "undue," influence over public policy.

Nevertheless, when given a choice, Americans have shown little desire to have taxpayer money given to candidates to campaign. Though it does not raise tax liability, barely one in 10 Americans opts for \$3 of his federal tax return to go to the Presidential Campaign Fund, the country's longest-running

experiment with tax-funded campaigns. In 2002, the Massachusetts legislature placed an initiative before voters to have the government fund campaigns. Voters in that liberal state defeated the measure by the largest margin of any ballot initiative in the state's history.

Supporters of tax-funded campaigns, however, are well-financed — by some estimates, more than \$200 million has been spent by groups dedicated to lobbying for "campaign finance reform" since 1995 — and persistent. By promoting ballot initiatives as "clean election" laws, they have succeeded in passing government



tributors take apart the arguments for taxpayer-financed campaigns. Or perhaps I should say 10 other contributors — two authors, Paul Taylor and Michael J. Malbin — argue, respectively, in favor of "free" television broadcast time and increased government subsidies to campaigns. In other words, this selection of essays is by no means balanced. But it is always fair, and it makes for a devastating critique of tax-funded campaigns.

For many, it seems intuitively obvious that privately funded campaigns lead to inequality and corruption. But the evidence tends to show that the opposite is true — a system without

limits on private contributions and spending tends to be more open to change and to new ideas, more responsive to voters, and less open to political manipulation. Thus, the most powerful essays in this collection are two that succinctly marshal the growing body of evidence supporting privately funded campaigns as the fairest, most open system of funding. "Why Subsidize the Soapbox?" by Samples and Adam Thier-

er, demolishes the "false assumptions behind free [television] time;" "Reform without Reason: The Scientific Method and Campaign Finance," by political scientists Jeffrey Milyo and David Primo, begins by noting that, "the public debate over campaign finance reform rarely — if ever — makes use of serious scholarly research," and, after summarizing that research, concludes that, "conventional wisdom greatly exaggerates the role of money in American politics." Other essays similarly demonstrate the failure of government-funded campaign systems. Chip Mellor of the Institute for Justice, and Robert Franciosi of the Goldwater Institute demonstrate the failure of "clean election" laws to achieve their objectives in Arizona, and show how the law tends to bias elections in favor of supporters of big government. Patrick Basham and Martin Zelder reach similar conclusions after reviewing the results of Maine's "clean elections" experiment. Samples demonstrates how taxpayer funding of presidential elections has also failed to meet its stated goals.

What makes these essays impressive is their cumulative power. The authors avoid hot rhetoric in favor of an accessible but relentless recital of actual data. They do not argue that the goals of tax-financed campaigns are wrong, but rather that tax-financed campaigns uniformly fail to achieve those goals, and in the process damage our democracy. And they conclude that because tax-funding proposals are based on a faulty understanding of how democracy works and the role money plays in democracy, they are destined to fail. CJ

Bradley A. Smith is professor of law at Capital University and former chairman of the Federal Election Commission.

A system without limits on private contributions and spending tends to be more open to change and to new ideas.

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Commentary

Silence of the Lambs

Who says American journalists are a bunch of pussycats, just because they won't print a scary cartoon of Muhammad? Like sharks, the media traditionally has demonstrated a keen ability to sense blood and swarm toward it.

American blood, that is. Right now they're going after Dick Cheney's jugular — for a hunting accident he didn't report in time for the press's deadline. And President Bush's head, of course, remains on the chopping block.

American officials are easy game, a turkey shoot for journalists. That's because the First Amendment guarantees journalists, and all U.S. citizens, that right.

American troops, God bless them all, are bravely sacrificing themselves today in Iraq and Afghanistan for our rights and to avenge years of terrorism waged in the name of Muhammad.

But the prophet gets a free pass from almost all of the media. That's because, journalists say, it would be "offensive" to Muslims to print a cartoon depicting the prophet (one included here). Of course, all of us know how touchy-feely the media has been over the years about depicting Christian icons. "Art" of the Crucifix in a bottle of urine and a statue of the Virgin Mary smeared with excrement evoked tears of sadness in many a journalist's eye.

Page One photos of protesters burning the Stars and Stripes here and abroad also pass the journalistic smell test.

But that's not considered offensive to patriotic Americans, especially those whose loved ones died protecting the grand old flag and their nation.

There's a different set of journalistic standards, as well, when it comes to separation of church and state in America. It's abhorrent to the press that Christians continually try to meddle in the affairs of state. But it's OK, the media says, for Muhammad to lead Middle Eastern governments and to wage "jihad."

This might offend many of my former colleagues in the media, but I think there are other forces at play in the decision not to publish the

cartoon. My years of experience in the mainstream media tell me that there are three main reasons why the press lay down:

- **Liberal Philosophy.** The debate over whether liberals dominate journalism is long over. Their philosophy is entrenched from coast to coast. Their liberalism dovetails nicely with the Democratic Party's. And everyone knows where Democrats stand on the war, political correctness, and "diversity."

- **Publishers and Corporate Bosses.** Even though the public thinks otherwise, editors don't make the really big decisions at newspapers and at TV networks. Publishers and corporate bosses do, because they hire the

editors — and they can fire them at will. Publishers and corporate bigwigs don't want the bottom line to suffer. A messy encounter with Muslims, such as a boycott, protest, or perhaps a riot, would dampen profits.

- **Downright Fear.** Mainstream journalists themselves suffer nightmares that should they offend any Muslim they will be kidnapped and beheaded post-haste. Failing that, at least the offended Muslim(s) might make the journalists' lives uncomfortable. Icy stares from their liberal colleagues and ostracism from the journalistic community, too, serve to keep any would-be mavericks in the corral.

I am sorry that I might have offended my former colleagues by revealing these ugly truths. But I am even

sorrer that journalists, en masse, failed their duty, disgraced their profession, abandoned their nation, defiled the victims of Sept. 11, and scorned American troops as the radical Muslim conspiracy spreads from continent to continent.

As Winston Churchill III trumpeted in a speech in Raleigh a couple of weeks ago, I hope American journalists, like their European counterparts did, someday find enough backbone to join the rest of us fighting the real enemies of America. CJ

Richard Wagner is editor of Carolina Journal.



Richard Wagner



Editorial

Women Dominate on Campuses

On American college campuses, the ratio of women to men is approaching 60-40. Of every 100 students who entered college last fall, 58 were women. The trend of more women and fewer men in college has been going on for decades.

For example, this year's incoming freshman class at UNC-Chapel Hill was only 41.6 percent male. Although group statistical disparities usually set college administrators into a frenzy of concern over "fairness," and "social justice," this one elicits only yawns. Stephen Farmer, director of undergraduate admissions at Chapel Hill says, "We really have made no attempt to balance the class. We are gender-blind in applications, very scrupulously so."

Most college administrators aren't worried about the increasing dominance of women on campus, but is there any reason why it should concern us? The answer is both no — and yes.

No, because the common idea that among any large population, such as student bodies, we should expect to see all groups of people proportionally represented is mistaken.

People make decisions as individuals, each person trying to do whatever is best for himself given his particular circumstances. Students who decide to enroll in college, or not to, make that choice carefully. With each individual presumably making an intelligent decision, the overall balance among groups doesn't matter.

Since male students are more likely to go into crucial fields such as science and engineering, shouldn't we worry that the United States will face a shortage of scientists and engineers in the future?

Not really. That is because the set of young men who are not going to college doesn't intersect with the set of young men who are interested in math

and science. The chance that any non-college guy would have studied those hard disciplines and gone on to work in math, science, or engineering is just about zero.

Although the ratio of men to women in college is not a problem in and of itself, it is indicative of a problem.

For years, there has been a movement in American K-12 education that is built upon the notion that schools must try to make boys more like girls. Christina Hoff Sommers, author of the excellent book *The War Against Boys* calls it the "feminization" of education. The core idea is that most of the world's problems stem from predominantly male traits such as aggression and competition and the solution is to socialize boys to be more cooperative and nurturing, like girls.

Some of the implications of that theory are that reading material that might appeal to boys (e.g., stories involving adventure or conflict) must be replaced with material that conveys "better" messages. Competition is also reduced or eliminated, as by having students do group projects rather than working individually. Even the games kids play during recess have to be controlled to make sure that they don't reinforce all those bad latent tendencies in boys.

The result of all this is to make school a lot less interesting for boys. Of course, many still do well, but the tendency is to cause marginal students to lose interest. Far more boys than girls get bored with school and drop out. The feminization of education has much to do with that.

The dominance of women on campus may be alerting us to a serious problem — the fact that early education is turning many boys off from making the most of the chance to develop their minds. CJ

Bluffing on Tax Reform

Leaders would rather decide how to spend your money

If North Carolina politicians really meant what they say about tax reform, they wouldn't do what they do.

Specifically, if there really was a widespread belief among state legislators — as there appears to be among editorial writers — that the state's tax code relies too much on high marginal income and sales-tax taxes and not enough on a broader tax base, lawmakers wouldn't continue to raise the tax rates on the current, narrow base.

That's what the General Assembly has done since 2001, almost every year. The sales-tax rate went from 6 percent statewide (6.5 percent in Mecklenburg County, thanks to an extra transit tax) before 2001 to 7 percent statewide (7.5 percent in Taxlenburg) right now. The top income tax rate also went up, to 8.25 percent from 7.75 percent. Theoretically, those tax rates are scheduled to fall back one-half cent. But lawmakers have said that before, only to reimpose them. Don't hold your breath.

Now, in the aftermath of the Emerging Issues Forum at N.C. State University last month, a two-day affair dedicated to discussions of tax reform, there is another round of editorials and columns calling for legislative action, specifically on broadening the sales-tax

base. And once again, it seems that whatever politicians may have said before or during the forum, the most likely scenario is yet another rate increase on a narrow base.

Sen. Tony Rand, the powerful head of the Senate Rules Committee, is proposing another fiscal swap involving counties and the state. The first one, in 2002, consisted of state government confiscating what were previously local revenues and then "allowing" counties to raise their sales tax by a half-cent to offset the loss. Essentially, legislators were compelling local governments to be their tax collectors. Now, Rand suggests that in exchange for the "gift" of removing from counties the burden of paying for a share of the Medicaid program, counties should surrender an entire penny of the sales tax back to the state. Then, the state would authorize the locals to levy yet another penny sales tax in its place.

That's indicative of today's political leaders: contrary to what may have been said at the forum, or what may be said in the future, most seem genuinely uninterested in pursuing tax reform. What they want is more of your money to spend. They want it because they are convinced they will spend it better than you will. It's as simple as that. *CJ*

Don't Kill the 'Growth' Goose

Citizens who link growth with new taxes will fight against it

North Carolina's rapidly growing areas — the urban counties, the coastal and mountain resort communities, the suburbs — are full of earnest, well-meaning, enthusiastic local politicians and civic boosters who are convinced that growth is good but that it confers more fiscal costs than benefits on local governments. Not coincidentally, many are in the real-estate business.

Growth is much to be desired, they say, but it doesn't pay for itself. So "we" must pay if we want to continue to grow. If we continue to grow, however, we must pay more.

The charitable explanation for all this is that these folks have never spelled out their views with enough clarity to spot the problem.

As Wake, Mecklenburg, Forsyth, and other counties prepare for growth/school bond debates over the coming couple of years, the politicians and boosters need to think critically about what they think they know and what they hope to accomplish. Presumably, their goal is not to trigger an anti-growth backlash from testy taxpayers. But if they keep repeating the aforementioned two statements — we need more tax money to attract growth and growth costs more to service than it generates in tax money

— that's what they will get.

A better approach would be to seek ways to make local growth pay for itself by restructuring government policy and finances. Here are some of the elements that should be included:

- Make public schools less expensive to build, more efficient to operate, and less favored over private alternatives. There is no shortage of sound public policies to further these objectives.

- Build new limited-access highway lanes with the maximum amount of private investment and user finance via electronic tolls, both policies used in other states and countries to provide needed transportation capacity.

- Alleviate the financial burden counties shoulder for programs, such as Medicaid, over which county officials have little to no control.

- Abolish the use of targeted tax breaks to attract business start-ups or expansions.

Make no mistake: if the taxpayers of North Carolina come to believe that continued growth will raise their taxes, they will become opponents of growth and a constituency for heavy-handed regulations designed to choke or manipulate it. *CJ*

Commentary

The Arts and Public Funding

Larry Wheeler thinks that his state pay of about \$100,000 to direct the North Carolina Museum of Art is far too low. So do the members of the N.C. Museum of Art Foundation, who have for years supplemented his salary with private funds adding up to six figures a year.

In 2005, according to a critical new report from State Auditor Les Merritt, Wheeler's combined compensation exceeded \$350,000. The foundation has also supplemented the salaries of some 50 other employees of the state-operated Raleigh museum, sometimes substantially.

As it happens, I agree with Larry Wheeler and his benefactors that running a major American art museum is a job that likely deserves far more than \$100,000 a year. I also agree with the state auditor that intermingling public and private money for staff employment at a state agency raises significant questions of equity and conflict of interest.

The solution is not to whack the current museum director's pay, or replace him with a lower-cost alternative. The solution is to move the N.C. Museum of Art into the private, voluntary sector where it belongs. Keep these three points in mind.

First, state government doesn't get to set the terms of the labor market. Managers can certainly set compensation amounts for top executives within state agencies, but those agencies compete with private entities (companies or nonprofits) for labor, materials, and clientele. If in order to avoid angering taxpayers or managers in other state agencies, the state holds executive compensation below that available from competitors, the result will be to lose top-flight managers.

Now, there's an argument to be made that the state shouldn't care much about this. What difference does it make if a taxpayer-funded museum fails to attract the same quality of leadership, or enjoy the same level of cachet, that a private museum does? The only potential justification of state museums is an extension of the state's public-education function, the success of which has little to do with whether North Carolina's museum is nationally or internationally well-regarded.

But in practice, this argument

rarely works (I know, I've tried it in other contexts). Arts organizations will inevitably measure their value, and communicate it to potential funders, based on perceptions of relative stature or merit. If you are trying to get prized pieces of art donated to your museum, you are

going to care about how your museum is perceived in the art world — because the donors probably do.

The second proposition is that the supposed public-education function of museums, symphonies, and other "high art" programs, if accepted as legitimate, can be more efficiently structured and financed in ways other than having state government own and operate them.

For example, if groups of public schoolchildren form a significant part of the annual attendance of a museum, then route the taxpayer subsidy through the schools and let educators decide how best to use it. Perhaps they will choose to load up the buses and head to the museum, where they will pay a reasonable admission price.

Third, reality intrudes on this theoretical justification, anyway. The fact of the matter is that most consumers of the service of viewing art are relatively well-educated, relatively wealthy people. They are neither a representative sample of the taxpaying population nor a group of disadvantaged people for whom some might argue taxpayer subsidies should be afforded. State ownership and funding of arts facilities largely means confiscating the money of people whose artistic sensibilities tend towards profitable forms of arts and entertainment — nice-looking prints, rock concerts, country-music festivals — in order to reduce the ticket prices for wealthier people who prefer visiting museums and symphonies.

I appreciate fine art. And I appreciate the managerial talents of Larry Wheeler and other arts professionals. That's why I think I should pay my own way, the proceeds of which can without objection or embarrassment be added to their hefty, earned salaries. *CJ*

John Hood is president of the John Locke Foundation and author of Selling the Dream: Why Advertising is Good Business, a Praeger book. Contact him at jhood@johnlocke.org.



John Hood

Editorial Briefs

Private wildlife protection

When individuals own and control property, they have an incentive to use it in a sustainable manner because they can then reap the benefits. History provides numerous examples of individuals and private groups who have protected species through private initiatives — sometimes even while governments were contributing to the species decline, says H. Sterling Burnett, a senior fellow with the National Center for Policy Analysis.

When state governments were awarding bounties for killing birds of prey, a concerned citizen helped found the private Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in eastern Pennsylvania to prevent the slaughter of thousands of hawks, falcons, ospreys, eagles, owls, and other endangered birds. When state governments were awarding bounties for killing seals and sea lions, a for-profit corporation protected the only mainland breeding area for the endangered Steller sea lion.

While the federal government owns only 4.7 million acres of wetlands and has encouraged the destruction of private wetlands, about 11,000 private duck clubs have managed to protect five to seven million acres of wetlands from destruction.

Expanding the benefits of ownership to the preservation of endangered species habitat could encourage more private conservation efforts. For example, government could offer tax incentives or credits to landowners who create habitat for endangered species on their land. Or, the government could pay bounties to people for every breeding pair of endangered species found to inhabit their property for all or part (in the case of migratory species) of the year, Burnett says.

Blood and charity

According to the General Social Survey in 2002, Americans who support more government spending are six percentage points less likely to give money to charity each year than those who support spending cuts, and a third less likely to give money away each month.

Similar trends are seen in blood donation. Those opposed to government aid make up 25 percent of the population, but donate more than 30 percent of the blood each year. Supporters of government spending to the poor are 28 percent of the population, but donate just 20 percent of the blood.

If the population as a whole gave blood like the opponents of social spending do, the blood supply would increase by more than a quarter.

This gap in blood donations is more than an intellectual curiosity: It can mean the difference between life and death. It also represents the livelihood of important charities serving our nation's needy, such as the Red Cross, which receives nearly 70 percent of its revenues from blood sales.

Given these facts about giving, Arthur Brooks, professor at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Public Affairs, suggests in *The Wall Street Journal* that people who caricature others as "uncompassionate" because of their views on government spending can afford a bit more humility and introspection, and a bit less pious sloganeering. CJ

THE PRESIDENT'S \$2.77 TRILLION BUDGET



Ban 'Equity' From Political Discussions

Equity is defined as "the state, or ideal, of being just, impartial and fair." On this basis, who could be against equity? It's a term frequently heard in policy discussions, and whatever one's political stripes, it's used positively.

But when people are pressed on what they think equity means, in operational terms, that's when the love-in falls apart. I recently experienced this first-hand in two situations, and it's convinced me the word equity should be banned from public-policy discussions and reserved for harmless applications, such as professional sports.

My first recent encounter with the pitfalls of equity was in a discussion about tax policy. About 60 business people, academics, think-tank heads, legislators, and interest-group advocates had been convened to discuss the state's tax structure. As soon as we began debating specific tax components, it was clear everyone wasn't on the same page when it came to defining equity.

For example, what is an equitable system of tax rates for the individual income tax? Some say the only "equitable" system is one where the tax rate rises with the taxpayer's income. That is, higher-income taxpayers pay not only more dollars in taxes, but they pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes.

Supporters say such a system is equitable for two reasons. First, higher-income households can afford to pay a larger share of their income in taxes. Second, to equalize the "pain" of paying taxes, those with more income must pay a larger share because each additional dollar is worth less to them than it is for a lower-income taxpayer.

But such views of equity aren't universally accepted. Just because a richer taxpayer has more and can pay more doesn't mean she should be taxed at a higher rate. This isn't logic based on equity; it's logic based on confiscation. Even if added dollars

mean less to upper-income folks, how do we measure this decreased value? Where are the income cutoffs, and how much higher should tax rates be to account for the reduced marginal value of the dollar? I don't think anyone knows.

Only when the committee dropped attaching labels of "equitable" and "inequitable" to tax proposals was it able to move on.

My second-latest encounter with defining equity came in a response to a newspaper op-ed piece. The author of the piece cited rising shares of national income going to the highest-income households as evidence of increased poverty in the country.

I replied that this interpretation was a distortion of the facts. Indeed, while higher-income households have enjoyed the largest income gains in

the past 30 years, lower-income households have gained too, just not as much.

It's not a matter of the rich gaining income at the expense of the poor. Rather, it's a matter of both the rich and the poor gaining, but the rich gaining at a faster rate. (Incidentally, the reason has to do with the increasing returns to education, not inheritance or luck).

My response was blasted by some as inequitable. To them, equity in income is a relative term. If the rich are gaining income at a faster rate than the poor, this, in the eyes of my critics, was considered inequitable, even if poorer households were still attaining a higher standard of living.

Oh, well, as they say, it's all in the eyes of the beholder. But now you see why I'm not a fan of the word equity. CJ



Michael
Walden

Michael L. Walden is a William Neal Reynolds distinguished professor at North Carolina State University and an adjunct scholar of the John Locke Foundation.

Cleveland County 'Addressing Central Office Costs'

To the editor,

Recently I emailed you concerning a story in the *Carolina Journal* that indicated the merged Cleveland County Schools had added a number of administrative positions since the merger. We have investigated the numbers used and find that the numbers were available on the Department of Public Instruction web site. However, we find that those numbers are not correct and are misleading.

The merger of the Cleveland County Schools, Kings Mountain District Schools, and Shelby City Schools was made official on January 13, 2004. Since that was the middle of the school year, the merger was not actually accomplished until July 1, 2004. The new Cleveland County Schools (all three old systems lost their identity) inherited all of the administrators that were under contract upon merger.

Not a single central office administrator has been added since merger, though some personnel were reassigned due to reorganization. Since July 1, 2004 we have reduced central office administration costs \$528,344 through

reassignment, resignations, retirement, and reduction to part-time status. The full-time-equivalent positions reduced have resulted in a reduction of over nine full-time central office positions.

We believe that our board has been responsible in addressing the reduction in numbers and costs in the central office. Thank you for the opportunity to clarify this matter.

Dr. George Litton
Cleveland County Board of
Education

To the editor,

Thank you, and the staff of the JLF for the work your doing. I have found some sanity in this state when I thought their was none.

David Powell
Goldsboro

To the editor,

There is no real free-market but it would be nice if it were really true. As a conservative of long standing one thing has been learned and that there is no more of "free-market" in the real world than a "free-lunch"! Yes there is the market place but the majority of the players are the little people and the people who

really can control the outcomes are the big-boys of capital finance.

That is, the plutocratic elites and their academic and technocratic servants who will dominate the marketplace such as the Rockefellers, Rothchilds, Morgans, Mellons, Warburgs, etc. Best regards.

Robert Hargrave
Durham

To the editor,

Cary has made the decision to place a sewage waste dump in the middle of our community with no say from us and refuses to move it even 1,000 yards away from our churches and neighbors. So far we have been able to accomplish nothing except go into debt, complain and try to get them to listen.

We do understand that the plant is an acceptable use of eminent domain but right downtown?

Richard Helman
New Hill, NC

To the editor,

Considering that the state has taken the gas tax and it was diverted to fund other items in the state budget,

instead of building roads as it was instituted for, there maybe an issue of accounting mismanagement.

According to General Accepted Accounting Practices there are specific rules regarding a government entity taking funds from a specific "bucket" of funds and using it for items other than what those funds were earmarked for.

This should be looked into, because unless the gas tax goes into the General Fund, it may be considered something other good fiduary responsibility of those funds.

This state taxes, taxes. Consider this: In highway building where a general contractor wins the bid and is paid in "tax dollars," the products that the contractors use is charged sales tax.

Hence the tax dollars that are being used to build those roads do not go as far because the products are taxed. The road tax is used to build roads, and in building those roads, it generates sales tax that goes into the general fund.

Hence the road tax generates monies that can be used however they see fit. While making the roads more expensive to build, the gas (road) tax generates sales tax and that increases the "crown jewels" of Raliegh.

Bryan White
Greensboro

Letters to the Editor

Is the Minimum Wage Really the Magic Wand Some Claim?

In 1914, Henry Ford paid his factory line employees \$97.30 per day, in 2005 dollars. Ford actually offered a \$5 daily wage in an attempt to cut enormous costs associated with high employee turnover, absenteeism, recruitment, and retraining for the tedious assembly-line work in his auto plant.

The minimum wage is currently an issue in a number of states, North Carolina included, and at the national level. Interest in a new federal minimum has little to do with Ford's productivity argument, however.

Overall labor productivity in the United States has risen rapidly since the 1970s, according to researchers, even though the 50-year trend shows that U.S. labor productivity lagged behind the G-7 (now G-8) countries before the 1970s.

Ford's minimum wage was intended to ensure the loyalty of a supply of workers in a distasteful job

situation. Today, those who advocate a minimum wage argue from one or several different perspectives, unrelated to the odiousness of a particular kind of work. Practically all of these arguments are tied to some numerical or statistical measurement.

The most popular reasons cited for a needed rise in the federal minimum wage, offered at the state level as well, are based on the cost of living. Because inflation erodes the purchasing power of a dollar, some advocates argue that increases in the minimum wage should keep up with the annual rate of inflation.

To begin to evaluate these claims, we should ask a few basic questions, starting with the reasons for which minimum wages were enacted in the first place. If the original intent of minimum-wage law was not to provide this level of financial support, it is unreasonable to expect that it should now do so.

There is some historical debate over this point. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 raised the minimum wage by 25 cents at a time when national unemployment was at 18 percent, decreasing the likelihood that the lowest-productivity workers would have any income to support

their families.

Since 1938 is ancient history to many Americans, examples from the less-distant past may better serve to illustrate whether the minimum wage is hitting its target audience. Santa Fe, N.M. raised the city's minimum wage to \$8.50 per hour in June 2004, and again to \$9.50 per hour Jan. 1, 2006. It will rise to \$10.50 in 2007.

Lawmakers in Santa Fe cited Ford's bold move as its inspiration, making the law applicable to private businesses and nonprofits that employ more than 25 people, not just to municipal employees, as some other local initiatives have been structured.

In 2000, nonwage benefits added about 18 percent to total worker compensation. At that rate, the total value of the 2004 wage increase was about \$10.37 per hour; the 2006 increase brought it to \$11.59 per hour. Now the first-round results are in, and they're not good.

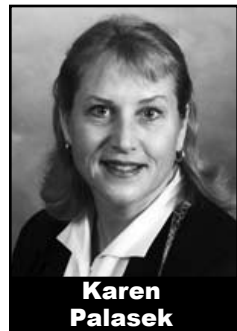
Consider the "working poor" of Santa Fe. Based on studies following the initial 2004 increase, unemployment in Santa Fe has risen by 16 percent since enactment in June 2004. Also, fewer hours are worked by those who are employed at the new wage.

Most significantly, employment

for adults with 12 or fewer years of education — working, low-education adults, the target population — experienced the most severe decline. Young, unmarried high school males, however, entered the job market in large numbers after the wage increase, showing some employment substitution between the two groups.

North Carolina is on the brink of its own new experiment with a statewide minimum wage. Based mostly on a pronounced need to link minimum wage changes to the rate of inflation, there is ample evidence both in theory and in practice to suggest that productivity increases are the only way to raise wages without sacrificing workers in the most vulnerable, and presumably the targeted, categories.

There is no legislative magic wand for prosperity. Instead, the minimum wage closes access to the market to the workers who are least able to compete in any way other than wages. As Walter Williams notes, the minimum wage is "maximum folly." CJ



**Karen
Palasek**

Dr. Karen Palasek is director of educational and academic programs for the John Locke Foundation.

Climate-Change Commission Finds Sky *Is* Actually Falling (a *CJ* parody)

By GRADY GREENPEACE
Environmental Correspondent

RALEIGH
This quote, "Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!" may no longer just be a silly line out of a script from "The Wizard of Oz." North Carolina environmentalists — and now state legislators — are taking Dorothy's words seriously.

Granted, the change has been subtle. But evidence studied by North Carolina's new Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change shows that — without a doubt — THE SKY IS FALLING!

It is falling because global warming has begun to melt molecules in the atmosphere, which then descend upon earth. This can easily be proven because many days — especially in North Carolina, legislators say — it is difficult to see any Carolina Blue in the heavens. Scientists, weathermen, and even ordinary folk, used to call these melted molecules rain, snow, sleet, fog and other forms of water. But members of the commission, which met for the first time Feb. 3, assure citizens that the sky itself is actually falling!

Reps. Joe Hackney and John Garrou, co-chairmen of the commission,

presented other evidence that global warming is causing:

- More people — including children — to lose hair. Because the air is warmer, the human body sheds unnecessary follicles.

- Shingles and siding on homes and other structures to thin. Akin to evolution in the biological world, members of the commission say, buildings adjust to change in temperature.

- Paint on automobiles and other vehicles to thicken to protect themselves against the stronger sunlight. Again, the legislators attribute this to "structural evolution."

- Bears to become more beligerent because warmer weather has shortened their hibernation period, depriving them of needed sleep. One witness before the commission, Daisy Crockett, a professional bear-hunting guide, said she has noticed that her prey has become much more ornery. "Them b'ars just ain't gittin' enough shut-eye," she testified. "I'm afeared we'll have to start usin' bazookas on 'em instead of rifles."

- The N.C. greenhouse-construction industry to lobby against global-warming legislation because fewer horticulturists are building greenhouses.



Yes, the experts say, *Chicken Little* was right. The sky (shown above) is really falling

"Our customers have stopped ordering greenhouses since your commission is telling them there won't be any need because of the 'greenhouse effect,'" Bonita Flowers, president of Greenhouses Forever, Inc., testified.

- Beavers in North Carolina are beginning to lose their teeth because the bark on trees is growing thinner.

- Many animals at the North Carolina Zoo are losing their hair. For instance, zookeeper Tarzana Rice-Burroughs told the commission that the zoo has had to purchase toupees for some of

its gorillas and chimpanzees. "They're not happy about it, I can tell you," Rice-Burroughs said.

- Beaches in North Carolina to close part of the year because the state's warmer waters are attracting huge schools of sharks. The sharks are chasing sunfish, which normally don't venture north of Florida, but have migrated to North Carolina, state biologist Jeter Benchley testified.

- Even more hot air to be expelled in the General Assembly than normal. Visitors to the legislature testified that they've noticed a gradual increase of bombast over the past few years — which is filtering out of the Legislative Building into the atmosphere and contributing to environmental damage.

Suzy Sierra, president of the Justice Center for Green People Everywhere, said government warming is an outgrowth of the greenhouse effect. "A lot of people have been offended personally by what they've heard on the House and Senate floor. Especially the personal attacks on people of green color."

The commission is scheduled to meet again in July. But because of the unbearable temperatures in North Carolina at that time, it is moving its venue to Alaska. *CJ*



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